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MARCHING AGAINST THE IROQUOIS

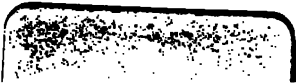
EVERETT T. TOMLINSON



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**MARCHING AGAINST THE
IROQUOIS**

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HEBER STRUCK THE HORSE A SAVAGE BLOW.

MARCHING AGAINST THE IROQUOIS

BY

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

*Author of "The Red Chief," "The Boys of Old Massachusetts," "In the Tracks
of the Redcoats," "The Rider of the Black Horse," "Camping
on the St. Lawrence," etc., etc.*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1906



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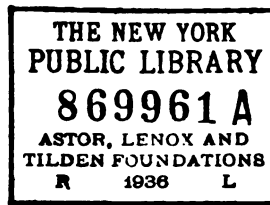
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PREFACE

THE expedition of General Sullivan into the country of the Iroquois in 1779 is to many a somewhat unfamiliar chapter in the struggle for the independence of the American colonies. Although Washington himself, after careful investigation and the sanction of the Congress, approved of the invasion, to some the destruction of life and property has seemed to be almost wanton. Whether or not the claim is just, the fact still remains that the army of Sullivan did certain things which have become a part of our national history and therefore cannot be ignored.

Whatever the justice or injustice of the deeds themselves, one lesson cannot fail to be learned from a study of the times, and that is a recognition of the need for sympathy, justice, and generosity in dealing with the Indian of to-day. Sympathy for him in his misfortunes, admiration for his patriotism, and an acknowledgment of his endurance and bravery

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unite in a common plea for justice in his behalf.

Every adventure and incident in this story has a foundation in fact, although the writer has used his privilege to modify them in certain details to make them to conform to the tale itself.

Among the authorities which have been freely used are, "General Sullivan's Indian Expedition in 1779," Stone's "Life of Brant," Barber and Howe's "New York," Campbell's "Annals of Tryon County," Botta's "History," Ellet's "Women of the Revolution," Moore's "Diary of the American Revolution," "Romance of the American Revolution," "Public Papers of Governor Clinton," and many of the standard histories of the War for Independence.

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON.

ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY.

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MARCHING AGAINST THE IROQUOIS

CHAPTER I

A RENEWED VISIT

“ DOES Jemima Randall live here ? ”

“ She does not, sir ! ”

“ I think I ’ll come in and see for myself. If I remember aright there were a good many places in which she might have hidden herself about this place. I have good reason to know that.” Heber Otis laughed as he spoke and stooped to untie the snowshoes that were bound to his feet. The time was February, 1779, and the snow which lay deep over the Mohawk Valley was now being increased by another heavy fall. The flakes, large and beautiful, had gathered upon the form of the young man to such an extent that when he had stopped before the door of the little house in which Susan Randall dwelt with her mother and the younger children of the family, his features at first had not been recognized by

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the girl when she had responded to the vigorous knocking that had announced the arrival of the young traveler.

The girl watched the young man in silence as she stood in the open doorway, and when Heber with his snowshoes in his hand entered the house she closed the door and quickly faced her visitor.

"You did n't wait for an invitation to come in," she remarked.

"Of course not. You would n't have me standing out there in this storm, would you? I have walked all the way from Schenectady this morning."

"I don't know why you came," she replied, an expression of trouble for a moment appearing upon her face.

"How could you know before I told you?" responded Heber lightly, although the perplexity or distress of the girl was not lost upon him.

"Why have you come, Heber?" she inquired in a low voice.

"To see you, Jemima."

"How many times must I tell you that my name is *not* Jemima?"

"Just as many times as you want to, Jemima," laughed Heber. "Oh, I know your

mother named you Susan, but to me you have always been Jemima ever since I met you out there in the sugar bush last spring when the Mohawks were after me.”¹

“I don’t know that it makes much difference what you call me,” said the girl thoughtfully.

Heber looked quickly into Susan’s face, and for a brief time did not speak. He was aware that changes had come in the life of the resolute young woman before him, but he was scarcely prepared to find her apparently so much more serious than when last he had seen her in the preceding autumn. Susan’s father, an ardent Tory and a devoted friend of Sir William Johnson, had been shot during the summer of 1778, in an attack upon the blockhouse of one of the sturdy Whig settlers in the Mohawk Valley. The girl herself had been intensely loyal to her father, though she openly declared that the cause of the struggle then going on between the American colonies and Great Britain of itself had slight interest to her. Whether the country was ruled by King or Congress mattered little to her, on the clearing which her father had made in one of the most beautiful and fertile spots to be found in all the valley of

¹ See *The Red Chief*.

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the Mohawk. With the death of her father the burden of the care of his family had fallen largely upon her shoulders, and the struggle for existence in the severe winter that had intervened had left marks which Heber could readily perceive. There was the same sturdy, resolute bearing, the same flash in her dark eyes, but her manner apparently had lost some of its sprightliness, and even his own coming, which at the time of his former occasional visits in the preceding years had never failed to arouse in her a spirit of opposition, now apparently had chiefly increased her trouble.

As Heber Otis became aware of the change, his thoughts reverted to the times when he had discovered George Cuck in the Randall home; and, though he endeavored to conceal his feeling, his anger against the man became keen at the recollection of the trouble he had created. Near Heber's home at Cherry Valley George Cuck had lived with his widowed mother. A treacherous man, several years older than Heber (who was now in his twentieth year), his face scarred by small-pox, his short, thick-set body possessed of unusual strength, his entire life in recent years had been a source of trouble for his neighbors at Cherry Valley. Rumors had been current

that George had been among the Tories who had served under Colonel Barry St. Leger, and the report was frequent that in the terrible contest at Oriskany he had had a share. In the spring of 1778 the suspected man had returned to his home, and although his neighbors had little to do with him, the reports of his deeds lacked confirmation, and consequently no open action against him had been taken. But George Cuck had not long remained with his mother, and concerning his doings in the terrible summer that followed, when the allies of Butler and Joseph Brant, "the Red Chief," had descended upon the little settlement, and the massacre of Cherry Valley had followed, there was less uncertainty. George Cuck had openly declared himself to be a Tory.

If his convictions had even then made of him a man whom his neighbors could respect, the feeling against him would have been chiefly one of anger; but the Tory was not found among the openly avowed enemies of the new nation. His work was of a character that aroused the most bitter hatred. He was declared to be a spy, revealing the plans of his former friends to their enemies. If a dastardly deed — like that of shooting some

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lonely settler and burning his buildings— was committed, the persistent rumor had it that to George Cuck, as well as to the red men, was the evil work to be attributed. Of direct proof against him there was little, but the feeling against him had increased until, if the people who had been driven from their homes in Cherry Valley, and been compelled to flee to Schenectady, Albany, and various other places in the Mohawk Valley for refuge, had him once more in their power, his fate would be swiftly settled.

The anger of Heber Otis against George Cuck was keen, not only because he shared in the prevailing detestation of the young Tory, but also because he himself had had several encounters with the man when he had discovered him in the home of the Randalls. It is true that the occasion of these visits was attributed to the common cause in which both George Cuck and Mr. Randall were engaged, but the latter was a man whose life had been upright, and his devotion to the cause of King George was consistent, and perhaps natural to one of Mr. Randall's temperament. With George Cuck, however, it was not principle, but the entire lack of it, that had caused him to enter upon the evil

courses he pursued, and Heber, in his own mind, was convinced that the explanation of the Tory's visit at the Randalls' was to be found in other and entirely different sources from those which had been so plausibly presented; and the young soldier consequently cherished a feeling against George Cuck even more bitter than that which had influenced his neighbors. Even now, on the occasion of his present visit, there were special reasons for learning of the young Tory's whereabouts, although Heber did not deem it necessary to explain to "Jemima" the entire purpose of his unexpected coming. Tall, athletic, of dark complexion, with clear features, Heber Otis, as he shook the snow from his fur cap and fur-trimmed hunting suit, and, placing his rifle in one corner of the kitchen, faced Susan (or "Jemima" as he persisted in calling her) and entered into the conversation with her which has been recorded, certainly presented the appearance of as earnest and vigorous a young member of the militia as was to be found between Albany and Fort Schuyler in the trying days of 1779.

"Where is your family now?" inquired Susan.

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"At Schenectady. They've been there ever since the massacre."

"What has become of that peculiar friend of yours?"

"Who is that? Oh, you mean Timothy Murphy?"

"I don't know his name, but he was with you two or three times when you came here."

"I have n't seen Tim since last September. He was left with the guard at Cherry Valley, you know."

"No, I don't know. How should I? All I know is that he was the queerest man I ever saw. I remember that the distance between his shoulders seemed to be greater than from his head to his feet."

"Tim is a bit queer in his shape," acknowledged Heber with a laugh. "But his heart is as big as his fist, and that is saying a good deal for him. I think he's the strongest man I ever saw. I honestly believe he could bend a gun-barrel with his hands. And then his 'uniform' makes him look strange, too. You know he is one of Morgan's Virginia riflemen, and they were among the first to join General Washington's army at Cambridge. Tim was there, of course, and then he was sent on up to Fort Ti. and helped stop Johnnie

Burgoyne on his way to dance with the ladies in New York. Perhaps you've heard of that?" inquired Heber laughingly.

"Neither you nor I have heard the last of it," replied Susan gently.

"That's right, Jemima. But Tim came on down into Cherry Valley, and was left there as one of the guard after the massacre."

"What about his uniform? You spoke of that."

"Yes, so I did. I might have known you wanted to hear about it. All the girls are interested in brass buttons and red coats. Well, Tim's uniform is just a hunting suit, only on the shirt there is a shield that has on it the words 'Liberty or Death.'"

"I think I'd rather have 'death' than 'liberty' if I had to have it with him."

"That's what a good many have thought. Tim's rifle is sure death. You know his rifle has two barrels and so he can do twice as much as an ordinary man. He's the best shot I ever saw or heard of. Why, Jemima, he can pick off a squirrel running on a branch when it's a hundred yards away. I never in my life saw anything like him" —

"Don't! Please don't!" exclaimed the girl, her eyes filling with tears.

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"Why!" exclaimed Heber in astonishment. "What's wrong? What have I said? I did n't mean to" —

"Heber!" demanded the girl, her mood instantly changing and her black eyes flashing as she turned upon him. "Heber Otis, I did n't believe you could do it! I did n't think you could be so cruel."

"What have I done?"

"Don't you know that that — *man*, if you want to call him one — shot my father?"

For a moment Heber gazed at the girl without speaking. The sharp denial which rose to his lips was not uttered, as his thoughts went back to the defense of the block house¹ in the preceding summer — a defense in which both he and Timothy were engaged. And it was in that attack that Mr. Randall had fallen. Timothy's rifle had been heard many a time in the resolute defense of the place, and it was not impossible that Mr. Randall might indeed have been shot by the Irishman. But how could she know? How could any one be positive? There were seven of the defenders, and not one had been idle. But in the darkness, when only the dim outlines of the attacking party had been seen, it was impossible to determine

¹ See *The Red Chief*.

whose rifle had been effective. And yet Susan had spoken as if she had positive information.

"How do you know that?" he inquired at last.

"You don't deny it! You can't deny it!"

"I can't deny it simply because I don't know," Heber said quietly. "No one can know. It might be possible, but" —

"I know! I know it's so," interrupted Susan.

"How do you know?"

"Because some one told me, and he knew all about it."

"Who was it?"

"I don't know that it makes any difference to you who it was. He told me, and that is enough."

"Who was it, Jemima?"

"Well, if you must know, it was George Cuck. He said it was either the Irishman or — or" —

"Or Heber Otis, with everything in favor of me?" broke in Heber quickly. "Is that it? Is that what he told you?"

Susan Randall nodded her head slowly in reply and did not speak. Again Heber was silent for a brief time before he responded. It was as nearly impossible for him to deny the

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accusation against himself as it was the one against his friend Timothy. It had been impossible to discover who the assailants of the block house had been on that never-to-be-forgotten night. Mr. Randall, terribly wounded, had been seized and dragged within the shelter of the building, and soon afterward the man had died of his wounds. Where or how they had been received no one knew, except in the general way that the spirited defense of the place had brought many of the white men as well as red to the ground.

"Susan" — he began at last.

"That's right," she interrupted, smiling, though tears still were in her eyes. "That's my name."

"You know about that attack. You know Tim and I were there and helped the old man and his sons hold the place. Everybody on either side was firing, and of course some were hit. I didn't see your father until he had been brought into the house, and nobody can say just who hit him."

"Yes. Yes. I know," said the girl quickly. "I understand that. It might have been you instead of my father. But still it was hard for me to hear" —

"Of course it was," said Heber eagerly,

"and I was all wrong in speaking of Tim. I never once thought of the way you looked at us. I know now, and I'll go at once."

"No, Heber, don't go," said the girl quietly, as her visitor moved toward his gun. "I want you to see mother and the children."

"Where are they?"

"Out in the barn taking care of what little stock is left."

"Come on," said Heber quickly, "we'll go out there and find them."

Before he could leave the house, however, there was a summons at the door that instantly changed the plan.

CHAPTER II

DISTURBING REPORTS

VISITORS were rare in the Randall household, and the knock upon the door caused Susan to glance inquiringly at Heber as she moved slowly to respond to it. For a moment Heber was tempted to withdraw into another room and remain there quietly until he might learn who the visitor was. The snow was still falling rapidly, and that there might be any special peril for himself in the arrival of enemies at such a time did not seem probable; and he quickly decided to remain in the room, although he moved nearer to the rifle which he had left leaning against the wall.

Susan meanwhile had opened the door, and Heber could perceive that only one man was there, and the newcomer was not recognized by him. A thick mantle of snow covered the stranger, which he shook from his shoulders as, in response to the girl's invitation, he unstrapped his snowshoes and entered the room. As he glanced at the man more keenly Heber

was confirmed in his belief that he had never seen the stranger before, and his surprise was not diminished when he became aware that the newcomer was not much older than he himself was. The expression of the man's face was not unattractive, though it was evident that his interest in Heber was not less than that which was bestowed upon himself. Taller than Heber by several inches, the spare, wiry form of the newcomer indicated great powers of endurance, and though Heber had no means of knowing how far the man had traveled, his appearance did not betray any signs of weariness.

"I stopped to see if I could get something to eat," explained the stranger. "I have been on foot since four o'clock this morning, and I was disappointed in finding any place back here where I could get anything. Plenty of houses, but no people," he added with a laugh.

"Yes, sir," responded Susan quietly. "You are welcome to share with us what we have. It is n't much that we can offer you."

"A hungry man is not particular. All he wants is just something to eat," responded the stranger with a laugh that caused both Susan and Heber to smile in sympathy. The man's manner was most winning, and Heber's

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heart warmed to him, although he was guarded in what he said.

"You have had a long walk, you say," suggested Heber. "Where have you come from?"

"Oh, from up the Valley. This morning I chanced to come from a few miles above Fonda's Bush."

"Is there any news?" inquired Heber eagerly.

"That depends," replied the stranger quietly, though he glanced keenly at Heber as he spoke. "How far is it from here to Schenectady?"

"About fifteen miles. Are you going there?"

"Oh, I may before I go back," said the man lightly. "It all depends."

"Back where?" said Heber a little more sharply. "In times like these it is not asking too much to have every stranger, especially when he stops and asks for supplies, declare himself."

"You are a cool one, young man," retorted the man after he had returned Heber's glance. "Perhaps you will explain to me by what right you make a wayfaring man stand and deliver."

There was a slight element of mockery in the man's tones that was exceedingly irritating to Heber, and he replied, "The only right is that of asking a stranger who stops for food at the house of unprotected" —

"Then you don't belong here?" interrupted the stranger.

"I am a friend of the family," explained Heber, his face flushing slightly as he became aware of the slip he had made.

"Ah! yes. Hum, I see, I see," replied the stranger, glancing quizzically at the two people in the room. "Perhaps you'll tell me where you are from?"

"Yes, I am entirely willing to state that I am from Cherry Valley, though since the massacre I have been in Schenectady. Now where do you belong?"

"I belong right here until I get my dinner," laughed the stranger, although Heber was aware that the reference to Cherry Valley instantly had interested the man. "Do you mean to tell me you were at Cherry Valley when Brant and Butler made their attack?"

"I was, but you haven't told me who you are or where you come from."

"Do you know Colonel Campbell?"

"I do."

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"Did you ever meet an Irishman named Tim Murphy?"

"Do you know Tim?"

"No, sir. I never saw him in my life."

"What made you ask me if I knew him, then?"

"I've heard a good deal about him. Is he much of a shot?"

"Is he?" laughed Heber. "You ought to see him with his double-barreled rifle."

"Yes, I see you know him. He had a friend that came to Cherry Valley too. Let me see. What was his name?"

"Joe Elerson?" inquired Heber, referring to another famous member of Morgan's riflemen who had been left at Cherry Valley to guard the frontier.

"That's the man. I left him day before yesterday."

"Where?"

"At Fort Stanwix, or Fort Schuyler, as I suppose we must say now."

"Do you belong there?" demanded Heber.

"I have been there. I heard Joe singing the praises of his friend Tim until I could hardly bring myself to believe there really is such a man. And yet you declare you have seen him."

"What was Joe doing at Fort Schuyler? He belongs in Cherry Valley."

"He came to bring word to Colonel Campbell."

"About his wife and children? Has any word come from them?" demanded Heber, instantly aroused by the reference. In the attack upon Cherry Valley, Mrs. Campbell, her four children and her aged mother had been made prisoners by the Indians,¹ and not a word had been received concerning their fate, although it had been believed by many that the unfortunate woman had been carried to some of the more distant villages of the red men, and that ultimately something would be heard from them.

"That I can't tell you. I don't mind telling you, though, that my name is Miles Sprague, for I see that you belong to the side that will not harm me." As he spoke the young man laughed; and Heber, though he was somehow aware that he had told Miles much about himself while in return he had received only slight information concerning the newcomer, laughed also.

Susan Randall, who had left the two young men largely to themselves while she busied

¹ See *The Red Chief*.

herself in preparing the simple meal which was to be served, now opened the kitchen door and with a shout summoned the rest of the family from the barn. Her action instantly caused Miles to rise and glance apprehensively at Heber, an act which confirmed the latter in his conviction that Miles Sprague was really more than at first he had suspected.

"It's all right," whispered Heber. "Just her mother and the children."

Apparently satisfied by the explanation, Miles nevertheless was still watchful, as Heber could readily perceive; but when the children came plunging through the snow, followed by their mother, the stranger's manner quickly changed. As soon as he had been introduced by Heber the newcomer turned to assist Mrs. Randall, and then laughed and talked to the children till their shyness quickly disappeared.

The simple repast was now prepared, and the two young men joined the family about the table. Miles Sprague told stories and laughed until even Susan was compelled to share in the merriment. Her mother, however, was silent throughout the meal, and as Heber watched her he could see that her face was thin and drawn, and he had no difficulty in understanding the suffering through which the

lonely woman had passed in the dreary winter which even yet gave no promise of a speedy departure.

At last, when the dinner had all been eaten and the young men arose from their seats, Miles Sprague said to Susan, "I am grateful to you for your kindness in taking a stranger in. I must push on at once, for I have business of great importance. I want now to pay you."

"For what?" demanded Susan.

"For my dinner."

"There is no pay for that. You are welcome to the little you had," replied Susan quietly.

"Then I shall give you my thanks and this to the children," he added as he thrust a small coin into the hands of the youngest child. "May I ask," he added as he turned and faced Susan once more, "if you plan to stay here in this house long?"

"Why, yes. Why not? We have nowhere else to go."

"May I ask, then, if you are to be here, too?" inquired Miles of Heber.

"No. I don't belong here, as I told you. I just came up to-day, that's all."

"Then I want to ask you to take these

people back to Schenectady with you when you go."

"What do you mean?" demanded Heber.

"I mean that it is not safe for them to stay here, that's all," said Miles quietly.

"And I chance to know of what I am speaking, too."

"What is it? What is the danger?" demanded Heber.

"The danger is just this : Brant has made plans for a descent on the Mohawk Valley" —

"But not in the winter time? Not in such weather as this?" interrupted Heber.

"Winter and snow and cold can't hold that villain back," said Miles hotly. "I know what I'm talking about. His plan is to strike in three different places at about the same time. The Shawnees and the Delawares are to meet together and strike the frontier of Virginia, and at the same time Brant, and perhaps Johnson and Butler, will hit the Mohawk Valley — this is to be the most important part of the whole affair, for they will have the Six Nations with them, you see — and then another force will be sent round by the Unadilla and strike at every settlement of Schoharie. There, I've told you the whole thing, though I am supposed not to refer to it,

but you have treated me so well that I can't bear to think of you as being left here all alone." Miles spoke in a low voice, for he did not wish to frighten the children, who were all in another part of the room now.

"It may be as you say," said Susan; "but I do not think we shall suffer."

"It will not be safe for you to stay here," said Miles hastily. It was plain that he did not understand what was behind the girl's words, and had no thought that her sympathies were not the same as his own in the struggle.

"You say the six nations are going into this thing with Brant? Do you mean that the Oneidas have joined him?" inquired Heber.

"No. The Oneidas are all right, or were, as far as we knew, two days ago. Brant has told them, though, if they still did not join him he would treat them all as he proposes to treat every white man, woman and child in the Mohawk Valley."

"Will they hold out?"

"That remains to be seen."

"What about the Onondagas? They pretended last year that they were all friendly. At least that is what one of their oldest

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sachems said in his speech before the council at Johnstown."

"They have talked all right, but there is a feeling that they are playing us false. We think the Tuscaroras will be with the Oneidas on our side, but they are too weak to amount to much one way or the other."

"I don't think we shall be harmed," repeated Susan.

"I don't see why you think that."

"They will not touch the royalists, will they?" she demanded.

"They say they won't, but it won't do to trust them," replied Miles lightly. "But that won't affect you. There isn't any one who would ever make the mistake of calling you a Tory."

"We are loyalists just the same," said Susan firmly.

Miles laughed, but the expression in the face of the girl quickly sobered him. "Do you mean it?" he demanded.

"I most certainly do."

Turning to Heber the young man said angrily, "I thought you told me you were from Cherry Valley?"

"So he did," broke in Susan quickly, as she saw Heber's face flush at the words.

"He is from Cherry Valley, and he is a rebel, too ; but that does n't mean that *we* are, does it? We're two women here alone—my mother and I—and we can't fight, but if we could we'd be on the King's side." The girl's black eyes snapped as she spoke fearlessly, and Miles Sprague laughed.

"Serious again," he said, "Tory or Whig won't matter with Brant. It won't be safe for you to stay here."

"We shall stay," affirmed Susan. "The Randalls would n't run even if they had a place to run into," she added with a smile.

"'Randall'? Is your name Randall?" demanded Miles quickly. Before the girl could respond he drew a paper from his pocket, which he read carefully. Then turning abruptly to Heber, he said: "I know who you are. You are George Cuck, and they want you at Johnstown, where they are all ready for the hanging of your friend Helmer."

CHAPTER III

A DISCOVERY

FOR a moment Heber Otis stared blankly into the face of the man without speaking. The reference to the detested Tory was so unexpected that even the charge that he himself was the man in question failed to impress him. "George Cuck, George Cuck," he demanded eagerly at last. "What do you know about him? Where is he?"

"He is right here before my eyes, and he does n't get away from me, either!" retorted Miles. "He is wanted at Johnstown, and I'm of the opinion he'll be on hand, too, to answer for his life."

"Do you think I am George Cuck?" inquired Heber quietly.

"I do that."

"Well, all I can say is that I am as anxious to find him as ever you can be. But I am not your man."

"You can explain all that at Johnstown," retorted Miles. "The paper states that he is likely to be found at the Randalls'. I was n't

looking for him exactly, but I can tell you I'm mighty glad to find him."

"When you find him I wish you would let me know," laughed Heber.

"You can't put me off that way!" exclaimed Miles angrily. "You'll have to go with me. If you have any explanation to make you can give it afterward."

"Oh, I must go with you, must I?" said Heber tauntingly. "Well, suppose I should decide that I did n't care to go. What then?"

"I should make you."

"How?"

"There are more ways than one."

"Here!" interrupted Susan quickly, fearful that the trouble between the young men was likely to assume a more serious form. "He's no more George Cuck than I am. He's Heber Otis of Cherry Valley, just as he told you. He does n't love George Cuck any more than you do."

"Do you know George Cuck when you see him?" demanded Miles of the girl. It was plain that he was perplexed by her words and manner, but not as yet convinced that he was mistaken.

"Know him!" laughed Susan, "I should say I did."

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"Is it true he is often to be found here?"

"It is. I don't know what would have become of us if it had n't been for him. He has brought us game —"

"How long since he was here?" broke in Miles.

"I don't know that it concerns you. It's enough for you to know that he is n't here now. It is just as I told you; this is Heber Otis," she explained, as she pointed at the young man, "and you will only make yourself ridiculous if you try to take him with you."

"I am not so sure about that," said Miles slowly. It was evident he was puzzled and uncertain just what to do.

"Does n't your paper describe George Cuck?" demanded Susan.

"Yes, after a fashion," admitted Miles, glancing again at the letter in his hand.

"Does n't it state that he is shorter, that his face is scarred by smallpox, that —"

"Oh, well, I'll take your word for it," said Miles hastily as he thrust the paper back into his pocket. "I must beg your pardon, sir," he added, as he extended his hand to Heber.

"That is all right," responded Heber. "I confess I do not feel complimented, being

taken for that rascal. If I do look like him I think I'll go out and follow the example of Judas. If you don't mind, I should like to know what it is that George Cuck has been doing now."

Miles laughed good naturedly as he said, "I am not expected to say anything about it, but I'll agree you are entitled to an explanation, for I did almost take you with me."

Heber smiled dryly at the calm assurance of the young man, but as it had not been necessary for him to offer any resistance, he did not deem it necessary now to make any protest.

"Last fall Sir John Johnson sent some men down from Canada, and they got together a band of forty or fifty of the Tories he could rely upon, and they all went up to Johnson Hall one night to dig up an iron chest that had been hidden there. It does n't do any harm to tell you all this now," Miles added graciously, "for the thing has been done."

"What was in the box?" inquired Heber, interested at once.

"The papers — the grants and deeds and the like — that belonged to the Johnsons — father as well as son. Well, the party went up there, as I said " —

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"And found the chest?" broke in Heber.

"Yes, they found the chest. It seems that the Johnsons had hidden all these papers in it just before they made a run of it for Canada and had dug a deep hole near one of the walks above the place and buried the box there. The Tories found the place all right and dug up the box."

"What was done with the papers?" inquired Heber eagerly.

"Nothing, that is, nothing much. When the iron box had been buried the men had not closed it very carefully; so the dampness got in, and when the chest was opened it was found that all the papers either were mouldy or had faded, so that not one of them could be read. They had their trouble for their pains!"

"Was George Cuck one of the men?"

"He was."

"How do you know?"

"This man Helmer told all about it. He gave the name of every one in the party, too. Helmer sprained his ankle when they were taking the iron box away, and he had to stay behind. All this winter he has been hidden in his father's house up here at the Flats, and it was only a few days ago that we found he

was there. He will be taken to Johnstown, and it may be he is there now."

"What will be done with him?"

"He'll be hanged, that's what will be done with him! General Clinton's orders are sharp, and every spy will be treated in the same way, too."

"And George Cuck too?"

"Yes, sir, George Cuck! You're a lucky man, my friend, that I didn't take you with me. I'm not sure I'm doing the right thing in not taking you with me either," Miles added quietly.

"Oh, I'm going to save you all that trouble," replied Heber lightly. "If you are going to Schenectady I'll go along with you."

"Will you? That's good. And we must be starting," Miles added.

"I'm ready whenever you are," said Heber. "Jemima," he added, turning to the girl, "I came up here just to see if there was anything I could do to help you."

"That was very good of you, kind sir," said Susan half mockingly.

"Is there anything?" said Heber eagerly. "I will not go with this man if there is."

"Don't delay on my account. George Cuck comes quite often, and he always brings some

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game when he comes. He has been a great help to my mother this winter."

"If what this man says is true he won't come many times more," said Heber quickly. "He ought not to be here at all. He is n't a safe man to" —

"To try to hang. Is that what you mean?" demanded Susan.

"That is n't what I mean, and you know it is n't," responded Heber, partly angry at the girl's manner. She had assured him many times that her feeling for the Tory was not unlike his own, and yet for some apparently unaccountable reason she was now defending him. It was all unexplainable to Heber; but after a brief silence he again inquired whether or not there was any help he could give, and upon being assured there was not, he and Miles, after a somewhat abrupt good-by, once more bound their snowshoes to their feet and departed. The blinding snowstorm quickly concealed their forms from the eyes of the watching household, although Heber was unaware that his movements were being watched as he led the way toward Schenectady.

For a time the two young men moved forward in silence, and Heber speedily per-

ceived that his companion's skill in the use of his snowshoes was not less than his own. The pace was swift, and Heber firmly resolved that he would not be the first to abandon it. The storm was now becoming less severe, and soon occasional patches of blue sky could be seen above the shining woods and fields. Few houses were passed, for only a few settlers had made clearings in the region, and many of these had fled for safety to Schenectady in the preceding autumn.

At last the two young travelers drew near a log house which also evidently had been deserted. The snow was piled high against the low roof, and no smoke was to be seen rising from the stone chimney.

"Let's go in here," suggested Miles as they approached the house.

"I'm agreed," replied Heber. The continued swiftness of the pace at which the two had been moving had wearied him; and although his resolution not to be the first to complain was still unbroken, it was nevertheless with a feeling of relief that Heber heard the suggestion of his comrade.

With a little effort they cleared away the snow from in front of the entrance sufficiently to enable them to enter the house, and as bolts

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were rare in the region they pushed open the door without any difficulty.

"This is a good place to rest a bit," laughed Miles. "We must have covered half the distance to Schenectady."

"No, not halfway yet," replied Heber. "Look here," he added, pointing as he spoke to the huge fireplace. "Some one has been here, and not long ago, either. These ashes are not old."

"Think so?" said Miles. "I'm not so sure about that."

"I am," replied Heber, as he grasped an oak stick and began to stir the ashes. "Fresh wood," he suggested, pointing to some logs that were lying near. "Want a fire?"

"Yes," replied Miles. "We ought to get into Schenectady to-night, and that will be time enough. I can make Albany by to-morrow noon. The Senecas and the Cayugas won't be after us before that time," he added, with a laugh.

Drawing his knife, Heber at once began to cut some of the lighter wood, preparatory to starting a fire; and as he did so he kneeled upon the flagging in front of the fireplace.

"Frost has been at work here a good while," he suggested, as one of the flat stones moved

beneath his knee. "That shows that the people have been gone some time," he declared, with a laugh. "You see the ashes are old."

"Frost does n't prove anything," retorted Miles. "I don't believe there's much of it anyway, and even if there is it could all come in a few days. Let me see," and stooping as he spoke Miles lifted the thin stone from its place.

"The ground is n't very hard, you see," he declared triumphantly as he thrust the stick he was holding into the earth. "Hello!" he exclaimed. "What's this?" As he spoke Miles seized a piece of paper which evidently had been placed beneath the stone, and unfolding it looked at it a moment in silence. "What do you make of it?" he inquired at last, as he handed the paper to his companion.

Heber arose, and taking the paper moved toward the light and read the following strange words:—

"'Wensday at set of sun. G. C.'"

"What do you make of it?" repeated Miles.

"I don't know," replied Heber slowly. "What do you think it is?"

"Probably some bit of paper that slipped

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under the stone sometime before the family went away."

"To-day is Wednesday, is n't it?" inquired Heber slowly.

"It certainly is," assented Miles.

"And let me see. Who was it that you thought I was when we were back there at the Randalls?"

"Why, George Cuck," replied Miles. "But you must n't make too much —"

"What are his initials?"

"G. C., of course. You don't think this piece of paper has anything to do with him, do you?" Miles suddenly demanded.

"I don't know. I am sure some one has been here, and not very long ago either, from the looks of the ashes. To-day is Wednesday, and the initials here are the same as George Cuck's. It may be he left this for some one, and will be here himself soon."

"But if he left that paper here for some one to get and it was to-day that he meant by Wednesday, how is it that the paper has been left and not taken away?"

"I can't tell you. But I know what I am going to do," declared Heber quietly.

CHAPTER IV

A PLOT

"WHAT is it you intend to do?" inquired Miles in surprise.

"I intend to stay right here and find out if that paper means anything. I know George Cuck, and if these initials are his and he has arranged to meet some one here, then I can tell you his scheme is worth looking into."

"You are making a deal too much of it," laughed Miles.

"It may be that I am," responded Heber quietly. "If I am I shall not lose anything, but if they should be planning any trick here, I may have something to gain. See?"

"Yes, I see," said Miles doubtfully. "But I can't stay here. I must go on to Albany."

"Of course you must. You don't have to stay. There's a little loft here," said Heber, glancing, as he spoke, at a trap door which could be seen in the covering of the room. "I'll climb up there and wait. Here, you give me a lift before you go," he hastily added.

"I don't like to leave you here alone,"

responded Miles. "If that paper really means anything you'll have two to face, and the odds will be all against you."

"Don't you be anxious about me," responded Heber lightly. "If they are too strong for me I shall not show myself. You know I'll be in the loft anyway, and I'll just leave the trap door ajar so that I can see and hear what's going on below. You needn't have any fears for me."

"All right," replied Miles, his hesitation apparently having departed. "I'll pull this table up, and we'll have the trap door open before you know it. You don't mind being left here alone?" he asked.

Heber laughed, and at once the two young men dragged the rude table to a place directly beneath the entrance into the loft; and mounting it, Miles quickly lifted the trap door. In a moment Heber had climbed to his side, and when the young soldier gave him "a lift" he easily made his way into the vacant room above. "I'm all right," he called. "Now push the table back, and the sooner you leave the better it will be for every one. Sure you can find your way?" he added.

"It's a straight road from here on, and a blind man could n't get lost in it if he tried.

Here 's your rifle," Miles added, as he passed the weapon and snowshoes up to Heber.

"Miles, put that paper back under the stone, and be sure to make the stone look as if it had not been moved. And throw the snow back against the door and make it seem as if no one had been here. Perhaps you 'd better put on your snowshoes back end forward. If you leave any tracks they will then be pointed toward the house."

"I'll throw back the snow," replied Miles as he obediently restored the paper to the place where it had been found, and carefully replaced the stone. "I don't believe the snowshoes will leave much of any tracks, for the wind is rising and there 'll be plenty of drifts before sunset." Bidding his comrade good-bye, Miles at once departed from the house, leaving Heber alone in his vigil.

The room in which Heber was concealed was a rude, unfinished, and unfurnished attic. The only light that entered came through the space which Heber had left when he had partly restored the trap door to its place. In a brief time his eyes became accustomed to the dim light and enabled him to see a broken rush chair near him. Placing this near the trap door, he seated himself in it and prepared

himself for the waiting which was before him.

The silence in the house soon became oppressive. An occasional whistle of the wind as it swept past the low eaves was the only sound he could hear. It was evident too that the weather was changing, for it was colder than when he had entered. Heber drew his fur coat more closely about him, and strove to possess his soul in patience. He had no means of estimating the passing of the moments, and as the time dragged slowly on his impatience increased. The muscles in his legs became stiff, and several times he arose and vigorously exerted himself. The relief was only temporary, however, and his impatience speedily returned. He even began to question the plan he had formed, and the more he pondered, the more the foolishness of his decision became pronounced. He had acted too impulsively, as he many times had done before, he assured himself. What likelihood was there that George Cuck had made an appointment to meet any one in the deserted house? The young Tory had not been seen since the preceding summer, and except for the statement of Susan Randall had not been heard of in the region. The place too was not far

from the homes of those who were known to be devoted to the cause of the colonies, and if George had really made arrangements to meet some one of his friends, it was hardly reasonable to suppose that he would have selected a meeting-place that would expose him to the peril of being seen by some of his avowed enemies.

The reasonableness of such conjectures so impressed the wearied young watcher when the day drew to its close that it was only by the strength of his will that he compelled himself to remain where he then was. The time of the proposed meeting was at "the set of the sun," and as that time was almost here he decided to wait until darkness should come, and then he would push on toward his home.

Heber settled back in his chair and once more drew his heavy coat about him, for the cold was becoming more intense. He had, however, barely resumed his position when he was startled by the sound of voices outside the door. Instantly alert, he dropped upon his knees near the open space and peered intently down into the room. In a brief time the sound of the voices was repeated, and a moment later two men entered the room. It was impossible for him to recognize either in the dim

light, but as both advanced toward the fireplace he perceived that one of the newcomers was an Indian. The other plainly was a white man, and as soon as Heber again heard the sound of his voice he was aware that the man was a stranger to him. George Cuck had not come, but the arrival of the two might mean that he would soon appear.

Intensely excited, Heber watched the white man as he drew near the fireplace and at once prepared to kindle a fire on the hearth. In a brief time the stranger had a roaring fire, and in the light of it Heber could plainly discern the man's face. It was that of a stranger, as he had at first conjectured.

Stooping, the man lifted the stone beneath which the paper had been found, and holding the note out into the light read it carefully.

"What did I tell you, Sam?" demanded the man triumphantly.

"What say?"

"George will be here to-night. He must have left that note, thinking I'd stop here before this. It just chanced, that's all; but it's all right now." The Indian had moved forward into the light, and his face could be plainly seen by Heber, who was keenly watching every movement of the men. He now

recognized the red man as Hide Sam, an Onondaga who had become well known throughout the Mohawk Valley. An inveterate beggar, his wanderings from house to house had made his whining pleadings familiar to most of the inhabitants. The last time Heber had seen him had been in the preceding spring, when Lafayette had met the assembly of the Five Nations at Johnstown.

"You rascal," suddenly demanded the white man, "what made you lie to me about that deer?"

"No lie," retorted the Indian.

"Yes, you did. You told me if I would go over to that big ash-tree—the one with the big top—right near the brook in the meadow of the Randalls, I'd find the deer you shot and hid there. There was n't a piece o' deer-skin within forty rods, and you knew it."

"Find him meadow?" inquired the Indian, apparently unmoved by his companion's charges.

"Yes, I found it. What of it?"

"Find him ash-tree?" again demanded Hide Sam.

"Yes, I found that too. But the deer meat was n't there."

"Suppose him not? You find him meadow,

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you find him ash-tree, you no find him deer.
You find one lie, you find him two true. Why
you mad if Hide Sam tell you one lie part
time?"

The white man turned and stared at his
companion, and then broke into a loud laugh.
"That's a good one, Sam! That's a good one
on me! What did you do it for?"

"Um!" grunted the Onondaga. "One time
white man sell me powder?"

"Why, yes, I b'lieve I do recollect selling
you some powder. If I remember aright, I be-
lieve I told you to plant the grains and they'd
grow up, and pretty quick you'd have all the
powder you wanted. Did you try it, Sam?"

"Um!" retorted Hide Sam, and Heber
could see that a broad grin appeared upon
the Onondaga's face. "Yes, Sam plant him.
No come up. No grow."

"That's too bad," roared the white man.
"That certainly was too bad. But, Sam,
you never paid me for that powder," he
suddenly declared.

"Yes, Sam pay him."

"When did you pay? I never saw the
color of your coin."

"Sam pay him in deer meat." As he spoke
Hide Sam threw back his head and laughed

aloud, and Heber was convinced as he watched him that he had made no mistake as to his identity. Hide Sam had been known in the Valley as a jester, and despite the Onondaga's begging and thieving ways, and his worthless character, he had been made welcome in some of the homes because of his well-known love for practical jokes.

"Here's our friend or some one else," exclaimed the white man suddenly, and a moment later Heber could hear some one at the door. Both Hide Sam and his companion had seized their guns and stood waiting for the newcomer to declare himself. In a moment George Cuck entered the room and noisily greeted his friends.

"Glad to see you, Jake," he exclaimed. "I see you lived up to your agreement and brought Hide Sam," said he as he greeted the Indian. "We'll make your fortune for you, Sam," he added.

Placing his rifle and his snowshoes in one corner of the room, George Cuck advanced to the fire and eagerly spread out his hands before it. "This is great!" he exclaimed. "It's getting cold, and it's a long walk from the Randalls'. I'm glad you were here in time to start a fire."

Heber Otis was listening intently to what the Tory was saying, and the man's declaration that he had just come from the home of Susan Randall instantly increased his interest. Had Susan told him of the visit which he himself had made? Had she made any reference to Miles? In spite of the girl's fearless declaration that her sympathies were on the side to which her father had belonged, it was difficult for Heber to believe that she would refer to his own recent presence in her home. Nevertheless he was made anxious by the words of George Cuck, and leaned still farther forward in his eagerness to hear all that might be said.

"We might as well get to business, Jake. I can't stay here very long," George Cuck was saying. "Have you any idea what I wanted you to bring Hide Sam for?"

"Not the least."

"Well, to come straight to the mark, somebody is wanted to put Phil Schuyler out of the way. Hide Sam is the one to do it."

"What! Do you mean shoot General Schuyler?" demanded the man whom he had addressed as Jake.

"I don't care how he does it if he can only get the man out of the way."



"PUT PHIL SCHUYLER OUT OF THE WAY"



"I don't believe in that," said Jake soberly.

"I knew you'd say that," retorted George Cuck. "But think of it. It is n't any worse for him to be got rid of this way than it would be if he should be shot in a fight. Now, is it? Answer me like a man. Is it?"

"He'd have a chance in a fight, and just as good a chance as any one else."

"He has a chance now to defend himself too. But it's all a part of the war. He makes too much trouble for us, and he will if he is n't put out of the way of it. We thought the rebels might do it for us, seeing as the New Englanders have all sided with Gates. But there are too many that are friendly with Phil Schuyler yet, and as long as that is so he's going to bother us. No, the only way is to get rid of him, and Hide Sam will do it. Ten half joes, Sam, and a jug of the best rum between Albany and Niagara!"

The gleam in the Onondaga's eyes could be seen by Heber as Sam faced George Cuck, and he was aware of his suspense before a word in reply had been spoken.

The conversation of the three men which followed could not be distinctly heard by Heber, for all dropped their voices low as if, in spite of the loneliness of the place, they

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were fearful of being overheard. As a consequence the details of the dastardly plot were lost to Heber, but he was convinced that the time they had selected for the attempt was not far distant. His conviction was strengthened when the men prepared to depart at once from the lonely house.

CHAPTER V

HEBER'S FLIGHT

TREMBLING with excitement and anger at the plot which he had overheard, Heber nevertheless restrained his feeling of eagerness to be gone, and remained in the loft for some time after he heard the closing of the door. The silence that now returned was doubly oppressive to the impatient young watcher, but the possibility that the men might return was too strong to be ignored, and besides he must give them an opportunity to go so far in advance of him, in case they did not return, that there would be no opportunity for them to discover him.

Endeavoring to possess his soul in patience, Heber remained in the loft for a half-hour. The roaring fire on the hearth had made his position far more comfortable than it had been, and the warmth was grateful to the young soldier. He could hear the wind about the corners of the house, and knew that it was steadily increasing in force. The newly fallen snow would be drifted by morning ; but the

thought brought slight fear to Heber's heart, for his snowshoes would enable him to pass lightly over the deepest drifts. The one thought that troubled him was of the peril that was threatening General Schuyler. It is true Heber had never spoken to the man, though he had frequently seen him; but in common with most of the people throughout the region his love for "Phil" was strong, and his eagerness to inform him of the plot against his life was equally strong.

At last, when Heber had persuaded himself that it would be safe for him to set forth on his return, he pushed the trap door from its place, and through the opening dropped first one snowshoe and then the other upon the floor below. Grasping his rifle in one hand, he seized the edge of the opening with the other and slowly lowered himself. As the room itself was only about nine feet in height the fall was too slight to be feared, and hanging for a moment Heber dropped safely to the floor below.

His surprise and consternation were wellnigh overwhelming when, standing directly before him with his rifle in his hands, he discovered the man whom George Cuck had addressed as Jake. In spite of his alarm Heber blamed

himself for not having made certain that all three had departed from the house, instead of having taken their departure for granted. Only George Cuck and Hide Sam had gone. Why Jake had remained it was impossible to conjecture, but the fact that the man was in the room was too patent to be ignored. Evidently he had been seated where Heber had been unable to perceive him, and the unbroken silence naturally had misled the young watcher into a belief that he himself was the sole occupant of the house.

Rousing himself by an effort, Heber looked into the face of the man before him, endeavoring to conceal his own alarm. As he did so, he became aware of the size and strength of his adversary. The expression in the man's face did not indicate the possession of a very keen intelligence, and the fact that he was an entire stranger gave Heber a momentary hope.

"Who are you?" demanded the man gruffly.

"I'm a traveler caught in the storm. I came in here, and the first thing I knew you and G — and the other two men came in too. I did not know who you were, and in times like these I thought it the safest plan to keep out of sight. So I crawled up into the loft."

Heber spoke glibly, and endeavored by the rapidity of his speech to conceal the anxiety in his heart.

The man stared at Heber as the latter spoke, and then said slowly again, "Who are you anyway?"

"You would n't know any more about me if I should give you my name."

"What is it?"

"Heber Otis." The expression of the man's face indicated that a refusal to comply with his demand might lead to trouble, and so Heber quietly declared who he was, and at the same time watched the man to see if the name indicated anything to him. George Cuck might have referred to him in some part of the recent conversation, and the possibility made Heber doubly eager to perceive what the effect of his declaration might be.

"I don't know anybody by that name," growled Jake.

"I told you you would n't," said Heber lightly.

"Where you going now?"

"Not very far in this snow."

"Where you headed for?"

"Which way are you going?" retorted Heber. "Perhaps I'll go along with you. You'd

like company, would n't you?" Heber's friendly manner and apparently outspoken way had, as he believed, caused Jake to be less suspicious, and though he still was standing in front of the young soldier, and his rifle was still clasped in his hands, it was evident that the man was more perplexed than angry because of Heber's unexpected presence.

"You can't go with me," declared Jake soberly.

"That's too bad."

"I don't know what George Cuck will say if I let you go."

"You don't have to look to that rasc — to that man for orders, do you?"

"You know George Cuck?"

"I know him better than I wish I did. He's one of the worst men in the Mohawk Valley. This plot of his to kill General Schuyler is the worst thing he's ever tried. And it will all come back on him, too."

"How's that?"

"You don't suppose the general's friends are all fools, do you? I have n't any idea Hide Sam can do what George Cuck has hired him for, but I do know that it won't be Phil Schuyler that will suffer most. I would n't give a snap of my finger for George's chances


of living a month after this thing is found out."

"It won't be found out," said Jake.

"It can't help being found out."

"Nobody knows anything about it except you. And if I shoot you you'll never tell, either."

Heber's heart was beating rapidly, and as he gazed into the stupid face of the man before him he was by no means certain the threat would not be carried out. He glanced at the door, which was only a few feet from the place where he was standing, but there was no hope of escaping from the room by that exit. His rifle, it is true, had not been taken from him, but he had not looked at the priming; and even if he should attempt to raise the gun to his shoulder Jake could act more quickly than he. Despite the dull expression of the man's eyes, Heber was convinced that Jake could act quickly if the occasion demanded, and that his stupidity was all the more to be feared because of the coarseness and slyness which were also elements in his character. Jake was like some slow-witted beast, and possessed also of some of the animal courage and ferocity of the brute. It was not difficult to understand how George Cuck had



obtained his influence over the dogged, ignorant man.

"Why don't you shoot me?" demanded Heber boldly, though his fear was great.

"I'm thinkin' about it."

"You could n't do a better turn for George Cuck. I don't mind telling you that Tim Murphy is one of the best friends I have in all the world. Tim does n't love George, and Tim's rifle, you know, is double-barreled."

"He'd never know it."

"He certainly would."

"How would he find out?"

"I was n't alone here."

"You were n't!" replied Jake, plainly startled by the statement and peering up through the opening into the loft as he spoke.

Instantly Heber Otis threw himself upon the man, and taken unawares Jake was thrown heavily to the floor. Before he could recover himself, Heber brought his own rifle into position, and covering the man he said, "Sit still. Stay right where you are on the floor. Now listen to me. I want —"

"I don't care what you want!" roared Jake as he quickly sprang to his feet. "I know your gun is no good. It's full of snow. The priming is wet."

"So is yours," retorted Heber, instantly concluding that Jake's confident assertion arose from a knowledge of the condition of his own weapon.

"Did you say there was another one up in the loft?" demanded Jake, apparently ignoring all danger from Heber, and gazing excitedly into the loft.

"No, I did n't say so."

"You said there was another man here with you."

"I said another man came here with me."

"Where is he now?"

"That I can't tell you."

"Sure he is n't here?" demanded Jake dubiously, again glancing toward the loft.

"I told you he was n't here," retorted Heber, quick to see where his own advantage lay. "I said he came here, and if anything should happen to me he'd be sure to let Tim know. And you know as well as I do what chance a man would have with Timothy Murphy after him. If you don't believe me, why don't you go up there and look for yourself?" Heber added, looking up at the open trap door as he spoke.

"You'd like to have me do that, now would n't you?" demanded Jake slyly.

"Yes, I should." Heber laughed noisily in his effort to appear at ease, but in spite of his attempt his fear did not leave him, and he was watchful every moment of the actions of the man. In a hand-to-hand contest Heber was aware that he would be no match for the powerful Tory, and he was by no means certain that such a contest was not inevitable. Apparently Jake had not been angered by either the evasive replies or actions, the only indication of his having been aroused being a gleam in his eyes, which were small and had seemed to draw slightly together in his surprise. As if by mutual consent the rifles had been lowered, although each man still retained his grasp upon his own weapon.

"I've about made up my mind what I shall do with you," remarked Jake after a brief pause.

"That's good. Of course I shall agree to whatever you say," laughed Heber.

Ignoring the reply, Jake advanced to the place where Heber's snowshoes were lying, and before the younger man was aware of what was being done he had picked them up and tossed them both into the blazing fire. With a bound Heber instantly leaped forward, and seizing the snowshoes flung them to the

farther side of the room. The strings of each shoe, however, had instantly snapped in the fierce heat, and the angry young soldier was aware that they were useless.

"What did you do that for?" he demanded loudly as he turned upon the Tory.

"That was a compromise," replied Jake slowly. "You'd better not make too much fuss, or I may have to throw you where I did your shoes," he added.

Heber's hands clutched the rifle which he was holding, and for an instant he was tempted to rush upon the man who was standing before him, unmoved by his excitement. The implied threat, however, might be carried out, he realized, and he knew too that a struggle would not be likely to end in his favor.

With difficulty controlling his voice Heber exclaimed, "'Compromise!' I don't see any 'compromise' in that! You've spoiled my snowshoes, and I'll never be able to go home. The snow must be three feet deep!"

"It's a compromise because I let you go at all. I know George Cuck won't like it when I tell him I let you get away. But you won't go very fast, and if you wanted to tell anybody what you saw here it'll be a good while before you can do it. So I'm thinkin' it won't do so

very much harm if I let you off this time. Next time you want to look out."

"So do you!" retorted Heber, his anger overcoming him. "If anything happens to General Schuyler it won't be hard to tell where to look for the rascals that did it! I think Tim Murphy, who hates George Cuck worse than he does a rattler, will be interested when he hears that Hide Sam and Jake had a hand in it."

The man slowly rolled his eyes and gazed at Heber stupidly. "Never you mind all that. The best thing you can do now is to leave this house."

"But you've spoiled my snowshoes."

"Better spoil your shoes than for you to be spoiled. Get out!" The man's voice rose to a shout, and Heber instantly seized his rifle and ran to the door, which he hastily opened, and then rushed out into the night. Despite his anger, he was quickly aware that the wind was cold, and as he plunged forward through the snow, which in places came above his waist, he realized how difficult, if not impossible, his attempt to return to Schenectady was likely to prove. The stars were shining, and the snow-covered earth was light all about him. The leafless branches of the trees bent and sighed

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mournfully, as if they were sharing in his desperate plight. The feeling of fear in Heber's heart was even keener than his anger, and as he pushed his way forward through the deep snow for a time, he did not once glance behind him. When he did at last halt for a moment, the sight which greeted his eyes was one that startled him.

CHAPTER VI

TIMOTHY MURPHY

Nor far behind him Heber could see the man whom he had recently left in the house now approaching. Startled by the sight, the young soldier's first impulse was to hide himself behind some tree, but a brief reflection caused him to abandon the suggestion, for if the man was seeking him the trail which Heber had left in the deep snow would easily enable the Tory to follow and overtake him. Accordingly he continued on his way, and in a brief time Jake was by his side.

To Heber's intense surprise, the man did not even halt, nor did he say one word to the younger man. Pushing steadily forward and glancing neither to the right nor left, Jake soon disappeared within the forest, leaving Heber even more perplexed than he had previously been by the strange actions of George Cuck's friend.

Relieved of the fear which the man's approach had aroused, Heber resumed his journey with renewed determination. In

places the snow had been blown from the rough road over which he was moving, and his progress was less difficult, but in other places the drifts were deep, and he was compelled to wade through them or make wide detours among the trees. Jake had turned abruptly from the roadway after he had proceeded a quarter of a mile, as Heber could perceive by the marks the man's snowshoes had left upon the snow. Whither he had gone it was impossible to determine, but Heber Otis was well content to be rid of the presence of the Tory.

A howl of a wolf in the distance startled Heber when two hours had elapsed, but the cry was not answered. The moon had risen, and the pathway was almost as light as day. The young traveler had no fear of losing his way, but the difficulty of proceeding through the snow soon compelled him to stop for rest. His halts were brief though frequent, and he continued steadily on his difficult journey. His progress was so slow, however, that the sun appeared before he had traversed half the distance to his home. He was wearied by the labors of the night, and hungry as well, and when he perceived before him a low house not far back from the road which he

recognized as the home of the Van Giesens — good friends of his — he at once decided to stop there and at least secure some breakfast.

His disappointment was keen when he discovered that no one was about the place. Without hesitating a moment he pried open one of the windows and thoroughly searched the house, hoping to find somewhere a pair of snowshoes which he might appropriate to his own use. The search was unavailing, however, and after a brief rest he resumed his journey.

Schenectady could not be more than five or six miles away now, and with the thought fresh courage came to the weary young traveler. Aroused by the prospect, Heber renewed his efforts, but he had not gone far before he discovered a man approaching. The newcomer was walking on snowshoes, but his skill in their use was manifestly not great, and as Heber stopped and waited for the man to come nearer, he almost laughed aloud when he saw the stranger pitch headforemost into a drift, from which his feet could be seen wildly kicking in all directions, until he with difficulty once more regained his standing.

As the man once more began cautiously to advance Heber gazed at him in a startled manner, and a moment later began to push his own

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way eagerly to greet him, for the short, sturdy form, the immense shoulders and peculiar movements instantly convinced him that it was Timothy Murphy who was before him.¹

"Hallo-o-o!" called Heber. "Is that you, Tim?"

The man stopped abruptly, and apparently for the first time became aware that he was not the only man in the road. In a moment however he had recognized Heber, and with a prolonged shout darted forward, only to pitch headforemost into the first large snowdrift, from which he was at last extricated by the aid of the young soldier, who had hastened to the assistance of his friend. Timothy's face was red and wet with perspiration, when at last he regained his standing, and an expression of amusement as well was to be seen upon his homely countenance.

"The saints be praised!" the Irishman exclaimed. "It's me long lost frind Haber!" As he spoke he grasped Heber's hand in a fashion that caused that young man to wince and attempt to withdraw it from the clasp, an attempt that was useless until Timothy himself released it.

"Oi stopped at Schnacady," continued Tim-

¹ See *The Red Chief*.

othy, "but yer mither tould me ye'd gone away."

"I had, Tim," laughed Heber. The sight of the great-hearted man did his soul good, and he beamed upon the Irishman in a manner that greatly delighted the rifleman. "I'm on my way home now."

"'Tis the place fer yez, unless yez'll come wid me."

"Bound for Cherry Valley, Tim?"

"Oi am thot, but Oi don't intind t' stay there long. Haber, me lad, yez must come with th' colonel."

"Come where?"

"Ach, the saints only know, but it's somewhere, lad. Oi don't moind tellin' yez that. Maybe Colonel Van Schaick'll till yez himsilf, seein' as how he's at Schnacady now."

"Colonel Van Schaick at Schenectady? Now?" demanded Heber in surprise. "What's wrong, Tim?" he quickly added.

"Ach, whist, lad, it's not tellin' the sacrets o' the colonel Oi'd be after doin'. But me own opinion is that it's Fort Stanwix itself where we'll go."

"Why? What have you heard, Tim? Has any word come from Fort Stanwix?"

"It has that," responded Timothy mysteri-

ously. "Maybe the colonel 'll let yez see the letter what Captain Copp up at Fort Van Dyck in the Oneida country wrote t' Captain Graham at Fort Stanwix. If ye 'd put some paper in yer ears so that yez could n't hear he might let yez look at it."

"Did you read it, Tim?" laughed Heber, for the Irishman's inability to write or read was well known, and Timothy himself was continually joking about his want of ability to distinguish one little "track," as he termed the letters of the alphabet, from another.

"Oi did not," responded Timothy. "But Oi heard all about it."

"What did you hear, Tim?"

"Oi heard that two o' th' Oneidas had brought word to Captain Van Dyck that th' Onondagas was goin' t' jine hands with Brant and th' ithers—"

"But the Onondagas pretended to be our friends," interrupted Heber.

"Yis, so they did — 'pretind,' " acknowledged Timothy, "but that's all it amounted to. It seems the Onondagas sent fourteen o' their best men out t' Niagara, and they pretended that they wanted all the redskins to give up their plans to make war on the Valley and be good frinds t' Gin'ral Washington an'

Tim Murphy an' all the rist. But the fourteen niver came back at all, at all, an' th' Onondagas were 'afraid' they had been kipt agin their will. Th' haythen! They was jist plannin' all the toime t' jine th' Mohawks an' the Senecas an' all the ithers an' come on down here clear to Schnacady before anny one knew it."

"Are they coming, Tim?" anxiously inquired Heber.

"They arre that, an' we're goin' out to meet 'em. Oi jist wint down to Albany to lit th' gin'ral know that Timothy Murphy was all roight, an' what should Oi hear but that Colonel Van Schaick was getting ready to start for th' haythen. An' thin too Captain Graham sint worrd that there were more than three hundred o' th' Tory families in th' upper parrt o' th' Valley an' they was givin' him a dale o' trouble, bad luck to 'em! So th' gin'ral thinks it's better to go out to meet it an' not wait for it to come half way. There have been a number o' runners or expresses from Fort Stanwix widin three days, an' the news they brought wid 'em was all o' th' same kind. Yez'll have to go wid us, Haber. an' no mistake."

"Are you going, Tim?"

"Oi am thot."

"Tim, did you ever hear of a Tory named Jake?"

"A Tory is it? An' his name Jake? Lit me see," and the Irishman snatched the fur cap from his head and thoughtfully stroked his hair. "It might be that his name was Jake —"

"He's a friend of George Cuck," broke in Heber.

"That's nothin' t' his credit, bedad!"

"Do you know any one by that name?"

"Lit me see. His name might not be Jake Ackland, maybe?"

"I don't know what his last name is."

"Sure an' Oi know th' mon, I dunno. Is he big?"

"Yes."

"An' has he a fist loike a ham?"

"I think so."

"An' his hair is a bit rid?"

"I'm not sure about that."

"An' he's good shot wid his roifle?"

"I don't know."

"An' yez say he's big an' rid-headed an' a bit ready to foight an' has a hand loike a barrel o' pork?"

"I think so."

"Well, thin, Oi don't mind tellin' yez Oi niver set me two oyes on him."

"I'm sorry for that, Tim," responded Heber with a laugh. "He knows who you are."

"In course he knows. Me an' th' gin'ral would be heard of by anny one what was annybody at all, at all. What did he say about me, lad?"

Thus bidden, Heber briefly related his recent experiences, omitting however to refer to his visit at the home of Susan Randall; and as the Irishman listened to the story of the plot against the life of General Schuyler his anger became keen.

"Th' rascallions!" he exclaimed. "Jist wait till Oi get me two oyes an' me two-barreled roifle on 'em. An' George Cuck too, yez say? Pah! They 'll not be after troublin' annybody whin that happens. An' Phil Schuyler! Haber, Oi see yez don't wear snowshoes," he suddenly declared. "An' what fer is that, will yez be after tellin' me?"

"That man Jake I told you about burned them." And Heber related what had occurred in the log house. "I told him you would not forget him, Tim," he added.

"'Forgit him, is it? Jist wait an' Oi'll

tache him how one o' Morgan's roifflemen forgits. Now, Haber, me lad, yez must take these snowshoes what Oi have an' go on wid yer word for Phil Schuyler. Yis, yez will!" Timothy added decidedly, as Heber began to protest. "They're no good at all for th' loikes o'me. Oi've spint more toime wid me head lookin' into the bottom soide o' the drifts an' me two feet wavin' 'round loike in the air than is good for me. Th' tricks they've played on me! Sometimes Oi think Oi've got 'em so 't they'll be rale good for a spell, an' then up they go an' at th' same toime Oi always have a special duty t' see how th' bottom o' the snow looks. An' Haber, lad, me curiosity is all satisfied. If yez don't take th' pesky things away Oi 'll break iv'ry bone in their bodies th' first toime they stand me on me hid agin. Oi will that! Now will yez take 'em?"

In spite of Heber's protests the exchange was at last made, and Timothy's snowshoes were bound upon the younger man's feet, greatly to the relief of the rifleman.

"Niver a bit nade yez fear for me, Haber!" exclaimed Timothy. "As long as Oi have me roiffe, and me two feet don't be after beatin' a tattoo in the air, while me face is at the

bottom of the snow, Oi fear no man. Now, Haber, lad, yez must mate me an' Colonel Van Schaick whin we come fer yez."

"When will that be, Tim?"

"Oi have n't decided yet. Oi must go back an' get Joe Elerson to come wid me. Joe is a purty fair shot wid his roifle, and yez are not half bad, Haber, an' Oi 'm thinkin' we 'll show th' rascals that Morgan's roiflemen mane what they say when they speak wid their guns."

The good-bys were at last spoken, and after Heber had remained for a brief time watching his sturdy friend as he ploughed his way through the drifted snow, he turned his own face toward home and resumed his journey.

His progress was swifter now, and despite the weariness that had resulted from his efforts in the night, he seldom halted. It was near noontime when he entered the house in which his family had been installed for the winter, and as soon as he had explained the necessity for him to proceed at once to the home of General Schuyler, his mother hastily prepared his dinner, and then after he had slept for an hour Heber resumed his journey. Thoughts of the peril that was threatening the general were mingled with those that concerned Susan

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Randall and the plans of George Cuck. The fate of the Tory Helmer, who was to be taken to Johnstown when he had been seized, was also a problem, as well as the identity of the man whom George Cuck had addressed as Jake. It was evident that Timothy had not recognized the Tory from the description which had been given him, but Heber was confident that the man would be seen again before the summer was ended.

It was after sunset when Heber arrived at the home of Philip Schuyler, and as he drew near the place he was startled as he heard the shouts of the guards and could perceive men running about the place in every direction. Had he come too late? Had Hide Sam already completed the task which had been assigned him? Eagerly Heber pressed forward, and in a brief time found himself in the midst of the scurrying guards.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE HOME OF PHILIP SCHUYLER

"HALT! Stop where you are! What are you doing here? Give an account of yourself!" As the words were spoken Heber felt the heavy hand of one of the guards upon his shoulder, and in spite of his excitement he turned and faced the man that had seized him.

"I came to see General Schuyler," responded Heber quickly. "Where is he? What is all this excitement about? I must see the general! Where is he?"

"You come with me," replied the man grimly. "I'll take you to him."

The guard did not relax his grasp upon Heber's shoulder, and too weary to make any protest the young soldier followed him into the house as soon as he had removed his snowshoes. His rifle had been left at his home in Schenectady, for Heber had felt no fear on this last part of his journey, and every unnecessary burden had been cast aside.

In a brief time Heber found himself in the house of General Schuyler, and almost before

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he was aware of what had occurred he was thrust into a room on the second floor, the door was hastily closed and locked on the outside, and his captor was gone. A candle was burning on the mantel, and the room itself had been recently occupied, as he was aware by one quick glimpse about him. The shouts in the yard and the confusion within the house itself were still manifest, from the sounds he could hear.

Recovering from his first feeling of surprise Heber darted to the door and shook it violently, but his utmost endeavors were unavailing to open it. It dawned upon him that he was a prisoner, and his anger at the thought soon gave place to a feeling of partial amusement at his plight. Coming on the errand that had brought him to the house of the general, it seemed as if the very fates had conspired to put him in his present semi-ludicrous and yet critical plight. A renewal of the calls and cries in the yard suddenly drew him to the window, and he could plainly see men running about the yard. The sight served to recall to him the purpose of his visit, and he glanced down at the ground, almost tempted to open the window and leap out. The thought that his appearance in such an attempt to leave the

house might expose him to the shots of the men outside, who would not know who he was or what was his purpose, caused him to abandon the project; but the excitement about the place might all pertain to the very object of his own visit, and excitedly Heber ran back to the door and shook it again and again.

Still no response was made to his summons, and at last the young soldier endeavored to content himself until some one should come to his release. He was aware that the shouts had ceased, and even the scurrying in the house could no longer be heard.

Again, after several minutes had elapsed, Heber advanced to the door and shook it with all his strength. His excitement increased when he heard a step outside the door, and in a moment he heard some one fumbling at the lock. His surprise was great when the door was at last opened and he beheld a young girl standing before him. She was plainly of his own age, and as she perceived Heber her astonishment was as great as his own.

"What are you doing in my room?" she demanded.

"Is this your room?" stammered Heber in confusion. "I did not understand. I did not

know. Are you Margaret Schuyler?" he suddenly inquired.

"I am," said the girl quietly. "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

"How is your father? Does he know? Has he been harmed? Is he all right?"

The eagerness with which Heber asked the questions apparently startled the girl, and after gazing into his face for a moment in her surprise she said, "What do you know? Have n't you heard? Come with me," she added abruptly.

Without a word Heber followed her as she led the way into the spacious hall, but when they were descending the stairs he came face to face with the man who had ordered him to follow him into the house, and who had conducted him to the room wherein he had been locked.

"Miss Margaret! Miss Margaret!" exclaimed the man as he recognized Heber. "Do you know who that fellow is? I was just going to get him."

"No, I don't know. Do you?"

"I found him in the yard and locked him up in one of the rooms till I could make him give an account of himself."

"Miss Margaret is taking me to her father," suggested Heber, angry at the

manner of his recent captor. "You can come too, if you want to find out who I am."

The guard stared into his face, and then without a word followed as the girl led the way into the room where General Schuyler was at the time.

When they entered, Heber was aware that various members of the family also were there, as well as several soldiers, and that every one present seemed to be intensely excited, with the exception of the general himself, who was standing quietly with his back to the great pile of logs that was burning in the fireplace.

"Here's a man, I don't know who he is, but he insists that he must see you," said Miss Margaret to her father.

The eyes of every one in the room were quickly turned upon Heber, and in some confusion he advanced and stood in front of the man he had been seeking.

"General Schuyler," he began, "I've come to tell you that there is a plot against you."

A laugh from the guard who had seized him and who was now by his side caused Heber to turn for an instant upon the man, but before he could speak General Schuyler himself said quietly:—

"Tell me about it, young man."

Thus bidden, Heber related his story, not omitting even the names of the conspirators ; but when he declared that Hide Sam was the Indian who had been selected to assassinate the general, an exclamation from the guard beside him caused him once more to turn and glare upon the soldier.

"There ! That explains it !" declared the soldier promptly. "I don't know who this fellow is, but his story sounds good, and even if he's lying there may be some truth in what he's saying."

"May I inquire your name ?" said General Schuyler quietly, ignoring the words of the guard.

"I am Heber Otis. My father lived at Cherry Valley till the massacre."

"And he is at Schenectady now ?"

"Yes, sir."

"I know him. I know him well. And I am grateful to you, Heber Otis, for what you have tried to do. You are a trifle too late, however, for Hide Sam or whoever the vil — the man — was, has come and gone. Some of our men are in pursuit of him now."

"How? When?" stammered Heber. "He's been here already? He didn't harm you, did he?" demanded Heber excitedly.

"I don't look like a man who has been hurt, do I?" inquired the general with a smile.

"No, sir. No, sir. But I don't quite see —"

"About an hour ago," interrupted General Schuyler, "one of the maidservants in passing through the hall saw a slight gleam of light behind one of the doors. She is a wise wench, and though she was startled she did not scream or stop, but by looking sharply she was positive that she could discern the form of a man standing behind the door from which the little flash of light had been seen. She was positive then that some one was concealed there with no good purpose, and that the flash had come from the light of the candle falling upon the blade of a knife in the hands of the man who was trying to hide himself. I was seated in the room opposite to the hall where he was, and the maid came at once, and without any confusion, to the place where I was seated, and while she was pretending to arrange some of the articles on the mantelpiece she told me in a low voice what she had discovered in the hall. Then without raising her voice in the least she said, 'I will go and call the guard;' but while she was walking through the hall she stepped on a loose piece of boarding, and the sound evidently startled my unfriendly visitor.

He made a rush for the front door and escaped. She could see that he was an Indian, but that was all we knew until you came. Of course the guard was summoned, and a careful search was made. The worst part of it is the fright it has given my family; but now that it is all over I hope we shall not let what has occurred disturb us." As he spoke the general glanced at the members of his family; but though no one spoke the sound of a sob from the maid-servant who had saved his life was an evidence of the feeling which possessed them all.

"We'll have the rascal! The boys are after him and he won't get away!" exclaimed the soldier by Heber's side. "And now that we know who he is his chances aren't worth a farthing."

"That is not what I want," exclaimed the general quickly. "Poor Hide Sam is not the one to blame. And, indeed, his knife is not the worst of my anxieties." General Schuyler spoke almost sadly, Heber thought; but as the young soldier did not know of all that the leader was suffering from the words and plottings of his "friends," he was ignorant of what was implied.

At the general's suggestion, after he had once more expressed his thanks for what

Heber had striven to do, the young soldier was conducted by Miss Margaret to the dining-room, where food was served him, the girl herself attending to his wants. The quiet that now prevailed in the house seemed to Heber to make the recent excitement almost unreal. The guards about the place had resumed their duties, there was no alarm manifested by the household, and there was nothing to be seen or heard to indicate that the life of Philip Schuyler was in any greater peril now than it had been before the independence of the colonies had been declared. It was all strange to Heber, who was yet to learn that quietness marks power as well as birth and breeding.

His hunger satisfied, Heber prepared to set forth on his return to his father's house. Hide Sam had indeed escaped from the house, though the search for the Indian was only begun; but General Schuyler had not been harmed, and the eagerness which had spurred Heber on his long journey to warn the general of his peril was now gone. He was so weary that the long walk back to Schenectady seemed to him almost endless. In his hands he carried a rifle, the gift of Philip Schuyler himself, but not even this recognition of his efforts provided the strength he required.

It was the second night which Heber had passed in the forest, and his eagerness to be once more at home led him to abandon the rough road and push forward in what he believed was a shorter way to Schenectady. The fear of losing his direction was not strong, for his experience in the woods had made him confident of being able to find his way in any part of the region. It was therefore perhaps not unnatural that, as the young soldier proceeded, the stars shining overhead and the leafless trees sighing mournfully about him, Heber's weariness at last became almost overpowering in the monotonous glide of his snowshoes. His longing for rest became so keen that he stopped and looked about him for some sheltered spot where he might lie down for a time. His surprise was as great as his delight when in the dim light before him he perceived an abandoned wigwam, and increasing the speed at which he was walking he soon arrived at the low entrance.

A brief investigation convinced him that no one had recently been near the spot, for the snow was untrampled, and the very appearance itself of the wigwam indicated that it was long since it had been used.

Hastily Heber crawled within, and the

shelter from the cold wind was doubly grateful to the wearied lad. In a brief time he had unfastened his snowshoes and drawn his coat more closely about him, and on the pile of leaves which the last occupants had left he was soon asleep.

How long he had been sleeping he had no means of knowing, but he was roused by what seemed to him the sound of voices. Sitting quickly erect, he was convinced in a moment that he was not mistaken, for directly in front of the wigwam two men were conversing. The sense of his own peril in such a place was for a moment ignored as he listened. The words could be plainly heard, and Heber could even see one of the men in the clearer light outside the hut.

"Never mind, Sam," one of them was saying. "I knew you did your best. Better luck next time."

"No get him," responded the man who had been addressed as Sam.

"Yes, you will get him. We will get him any way. Now I'm glad you met me here as you agreed, Sam; but I must go on. I've got to give Schenectady a wide berth this trip. You are going to stay right here for a day or two until this blows over, you say?"

“ Me stay.”

“ I shall be at the — Never mind where I’ll be. You won’t want to be seen for a while in the Mohawk Valley. Do you think any one really suspected you — knew who you were?”

Heber could not hear the Indian’s reply, for he had no question now as to the identity of the two men who had met in the forest; but in a brief time the conversation ceased, and he could see that one of the men was entering the wigwam.

CHAPTER VIII

HIDE SAM APPEARS

THE light was sufficiently clear to enable Heber to perceive that it was Hide Sam who was entering. The young soldier drew back on his bed of leaves, and tightly clutching his rifle waited to see what the Indian would do, and whether or not his companion, who was none other than George Cuck, he was convinced, would also enter the hut. In the tense silence that followed, Heber soon became aware that the white man had not remained, and Hide Sam, apparently without a thought that he was not alone in the wigwam, had gone to the side opposite to where the young soldier was crouching. The Indian had at once thrown himself upon the leaves there, and the sounds shortly heard convinced Heber that the Onondaga was sleeping heavily.

The relief that came with the knowledge that his presence had not been discovered was followed in Heber's mind by a return of his anger at the treacherous red man. Repeatedly the shiftless Onondaga had been fed

in the home of Mr. Otis, and Sam's "practical jokes" had been a source of great delight to all the children. This treatment had not been unlike that which Sam had received in the homes of others of the hardy settlers; and now that Heber knew him to be the Indian who had crept into the residence of Philip Schuyler, with knife drawn to attempt the murder of the man whom all the Whigs loved, his own feeling of rage increased. Doubtless, too, George Cuck had planned to meet the Onondaga at this secluded spot and learn the result of the dastardly attempt on General Schuyler's life. The fact increased Heber's detestation of his former Tory neighbor, for whom already his contempt, as well as hatred, was strong. George Cuck, however, had departed from the spot; but the Onondaga was still there. Doubtless searching parties were already scouring the forests, and it was strange that Sam should have ventured to stop as he had.

Despite his weariness Heber determined to secure the Onondaga, if it was within his power to do so. For a time the young soldier lay quietly on the leaves listening to the loud breathing of the Indian, and trying to think out the best plan of bringing Hide Sam to the proper parties to deal with him.

The first streaks of the dawn were appearing by this time, and Heber was aware that whatever was to be tried must be attempted at once. Slowly and cautiously he arose from his bed and looked at the sleeping warrior.

The Onondaga's snowshoes were near the entrance of the wigwam, and his rifle lay on the leaves beside him. Slowly Heber stepped forward and approached the sleeping Indian. Several times he stopped and listened intently, but the deep breathing of Sam was regular and unbroken. Stooping cautiously, Heber lifted the gun slowly and was about to step backward with it, when the Onondaga's eyes opened, and for an instant the warrior looked up into Heber's face as if he failed to realize where he was. In a moment, however, he was fully awake and sprang to his feet, clutching his knife in his hand, — doubtless the very weapon which had warned the maid of his presence in General Schuyler's house, it occurred to Heber, in spite of the excitement under which he was laboring.

"Put up your knife, Sam!" said Heber quickly, lifting his rifle threateningly as he spoke.

For a moment the gleam in Sam's eyes warned Heber that his words might not be

heeded, but after a brief hesitation the Onondaga thrust his knife back into its sheath, and slowly rising stood facing the young soldier.

"Where are you going, Sam?" inquired Heber quietly.

"Go home," replied the Onondaga. Heber was aware that Hide Sam was keenly observing him, and he stepped back a few feet, still holding his rifle in readiness for instant use.

"Where have you been?"

Sam scowled as if he was questioning the right of Heber to ask him such questions, but he replied, "Sam go Albany. See him big chief."

"What for?"

"Tell him send friend to Onondagas."

"What for?" persisted Heber.

"Mohawks, Senecas want Onondagas put on war paint."

"And you don't want them to?"

"Hide Sam heap friend."

"And you have come all the way to try to keep the Onondagas good friends to the colonies?"

Hide Sam grunted an acknowledgment, but did not speak.

"That was good of you, Sam," said Heber quickly. "You ought to be a good friend. My mother has fed you a great many times. You know who I am, don't you?"

"No know," replied the Indian, looking steadily into Heber's face.

"I'm Heber Otis. I used to live over at Cherry Valley before the massacre. You used to come to my father's house. Don't you remember?"

A smile spread over the red man's face as he laughed loudly, a laugh which Heber suspected was as much an evidence of relief as of pleasure at his recollection.

"Sam," demanded Heber suddenly, "where is Jake?"

In spite of his unchanged expression Heber could see that his query had startled the red man.

"No know where Jake," he responded.

"You know where he lives?"

Hide Sam shook his head.

"Did you ever see him?"

"Sam no see him," declared the Onondaga soberly.

"I thought you must have seen him sometime, Sam. I heard of some Indian who told him where there was some cider —"

The Onondaga broke in with a loud laugh.

"I knew it must have been you, Sam. You played a good trick on him."

Again the Onondaga laughed loudly.

"Where did you last see Jake, Sam?"

"See Jake many moons ago. No see him long time." As he spoke Sam waved his arm in a circle to indicate the vagueness of his recollection.

"If you are going home, Sam, you can come with me."

"Where go?" demanded the Indian quickly.

"Schenectady."

"No go," retorted Sam positively. "Sam no go. Sam go home."

"That's right. You must go back to the Onondagas and tell them what a good friend the big chief at Albany is to them. But come with me. My mother will feed you, Sam, and if you are tired she'll let you stay there and sleep as long as you want to."

"Sam no go. Sam go home. Heap strong, no tired."

"I hear that some Indian tried to kill General Schuyler last night. Did you hear anything about it, Sam?"

The Indian's eyes seemed to flash at this question, and for an instant the young sol-

dier's grasp of his rifle tightened. "Sam no hear," replied the Onondaga at last. "Who try to kill him?"

"That's just what they all want to find out. I did n't know but that you might have heard about it. You're such a good friend to the colonies, Sam, you would let us know if you had heard, I know you would."

"Hide Sam heap friend," said the Indian, with several very decided nods of his head.

"That's right. You could n't harm General Clinton, I'm sure." As he spoke, Heber glanced keenly at Hide Sam, to see if the name of the general he had suggested would cause him to say something that would reveal more.

"Sam no see him."

"Did you see General Schuyler?"

"No see him," repeated the Onondaga.

"Come on then, Sam," suggested Heber, as if he were taking it for granted that the Indian's protest would not be repeated. "I'm hungry. My mother will get us something to eat as soon as we come, and then, Sam, you can sleep in the barn just as long as you want to."

Hide Sam seemed to hesitate for a moment, and then said, "Me go."

As he spoke he put forth his hand for his gun, which Heber was still holding, and the young soldier at once restored the weapon, apparently satisfied now that Sam had been persuaded by the implied prospect of a means of concealment in a place where no searching party would be likely to look for him. Heber, however, had taken pains to shake the priming from the pan, and at the same time to make his own rifle ready for use.

Together the two departed from the wigwam, Sam first peering intently into the forest to make certain no other parties were near. As they followed the faint outlines of the trail Heber dropped back behind the Indian, and in this manner they proceeded for a mile or more in silence.

"Sam," said Heber lightly, "what is Jake's other name?"

The Onondaga stopped abruptly, and turning upon Heber said fiercely, "No talk. Too much like squaw."

"Are you afraid, Sam?" laughed Heber.

"No talk!" repeated Heber.

"Sam, did you ever hear what became of Mrs. Campbell? You know she and her children were carried away from Cherry Valley by the Senecas."

"Hide Sam no Seneca! Hide Sam Onondaga!" retorted the Indian sullenly, as the journey was resumed.

"I know that. The Onondagas are not so strong as the Senecas —"

"Onondagas heap strong!" retorted Sam angrily. "Onondaga council fire never go out. Onondaga —"

"Oh, yes, I know all that. But did you ever hear anything about what became of Mrs. Campbell?"

"Sam no hear. Sam Onondaga."

"So I heard you remark. But you don't answer my question."

"Sam no hear," and no further explanation would the Indian give.

In silence Heber and his companion proceeded, the young soldier carefully, though without displaying his anxiety, watching the Indian, and guarding continually against any attempt on the part of Hide Sam to leave him suddenly. To all appearances the Onondaga was going willingly, and Heber's elation increased when he realized they were near the settlement he was seeking. To have secured the man who had made the attempt upon the life of General Schuyler was no slight achievement, and already in his mind Heber could

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picture the elation of the men who had been searching for him. His own weariness was for the moment forgotten, and with swifter strides the two pressed forward over the snow.

A shout or call heard far to their left suddenly caused both Heber and Hide Sam to stop and listen intently. The sound was not repeated, and after a brief pause Heber said : —

“Come on, Sam! We’ll soon be there.”

“Sam no go,” said the Indian sullenly.

“Oh, yes, you will. You don’t want to stop now.”

“Sam no go. Sam go *here*,” and as he spoke the Onondaga turned suddenly into the forest at his left and began to move slowly.

“Stop, Sam! Stop, or I’ll shoot!” called Heber loudly.

The Indian turned abruptly and looked back at his recent companion, whose rifle was now aimed directly at him. For an instant neither spoke; and then, leaping to one side, the Indian darted behind one of the great trees just as Heber’s finger touched the trigger. The hammer fell, but there was no report, and Heber was aware then that the priming must have been shaken from the pan or had been wet by the snow.

Quickly darting behind a great tree that was near him, Heber once more primed his rifle, and then leaning low peered out at the place where his enemy was concealed. The snow was deep all about the region, and with snowshoes on his feet the Onondaga would have great difficulty in withdrawing from the place, if he desired, for though the shoes would aid him in fleeing they were awkward for quick work.

Taking his fur hat from his head, Heber thrust it forth on the end of the barrel of his gun, hoping to induce Hide Sam to fire, but the silence of the forest was unbroken. A repetition of the attempt met with no better success, and then the third time Heber peered out himself. The Indian could not be seen, nor had the part of Heber's head which he had exposed served to draw his fire.

Determined not to incur any unnecessary risk, and equally determined not to lose sight of the man, Heber waited, his gun tightly held in his hands and his eyes held where he could see the first appearance of Hide Sam. Several minutes elapsed, and the waiting became difficult. Heber's fingers were numb with cold and his body was cramped and stiff, yet still he watched for the sight of Hide Sam's

face; but the Indian persistently refused to leave his refuge.

At last, Heber decided that some move must be made on his own part; but before he could act, a shout in the forest behind him caused him to look back, and the sight of two Indians and a white man swiftly approaching banished even the fear of Hide Sam.

CHAPTER IX

A RECRUIT

THE three men had already seen Heber crouching behind the great tree, and it was the sight of him which had caused them to announce their presence by the shout which had been heard. The impulse to flee from the spot, which first seized upon Heber when he became aware of the approaching men, quickly gave place to a feeling of exultation as he recognized the white man as Miles Sprague. The two Indians, however, were unknown to him.

“Hi! Miles!” he called.

“Why, it’s little Heber,” exclaimed Miles, as he recognized the man before him. “What in the world are you hiding like that for?” he demanded.

“Quick, Miles,” said Heber in a low voice. “Hide Sam is right behind that tree yonder. He’s the redskin that tried to kill General Schuyler.”

“Where? Where is he?” interrupted Miles in a low voice.

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"Right behind that big oak," Heber explained, pointing, as he spoke, toward the tree behind which the Onondaga had sought refuge.

The two Indians had now joined the white men, and turning to them Miles said sharply, "One of you creep up behind that oak on this side and one of you go to the other. Heber and I'll look out for him here. Don't let him get away from you, and get him alive if you can, but if you can't — "

The two young Indians did not wait for Miles to complete the sentence, and quickly withdrawing into the forest, one made a detour to the left while his companion turned to the right, and both began to move stealthily and swiftly to the rear of Hide Sam's hiding-place.

Meanwhile Heber and Miles both crouched behind the tree where Heber had first sought refuge, and kept a careful watch upon the spot where the Onondaga would appear if he should abandon his shelter. In their excitement neither spoke, and, as the moments passed, their eagerness to learn the result of the efforts of the two Indians caused both to lean farther out from behind the tree. For a time the silence of the surrounding forest was

unbroken. The leafless trees almost seemed to be sharing in the excitement, and the tense stillness became oppressive. Miles glanced questioningly at his companion, but Heber only shook his head and did not speak.

Suddenly Miles stood erect and said, "There they are! They've both come back. Come on! Come on!"

Before Heber could reply Miles had darted from behind the tree and was running swiftly toward the place where Hide Sam had been concealed. The young soldier had perceived his two Indian companions approaching together from the forest in the rear of the great oak, and instantly concluding that the Onondaga was no longer in hiding Miles ran swiftly forward to join his friends.

"All gone," exclaimed one of the Indians, as he pointed at the marks in the snow which Hide Sam's snowshoes had made. His companion meanwhile had dropped upon his knees and was carefully examining the footprints. It was speedily evident that Hide Sam had removed his snowshoes, and keeping the huge oak between himself and the place of shelter which Heber had sought, had withdrawn into a clump of bushes directly behind him. When this additional shield had been

obtained the Indian had hastily rebound the snowshoes to his feet, and had set forth at his utmost speed, as the footprints plainly indicated.

"You must take after him, Wolf," exclaimed Miles excitedly. "It's Hide Sam. He's the redskin that tried to kill Phil Schuyler. If you get him you'll never be sorry. You go too, Eagle's Eye!" Miles added, turning to the other Indian.

"Where?" demanded the young Indian whom Miles had called Wolf.

"Never mind about that!" replied Miles quickly. "Get your man first. Bring him to Schenectady. Take him to Albany. If you have to follow him far you can bring him into Fort Stanwix. Get *him*, though, first. He's a fleet foot, and he'll lead you a lively chase. Perhaps he's too fast for the Oneidas to catch."

The young Indian's eyes flashed as he turned and spoke a few words in his own tongue to his companion. In a moment, however, both had departed, and when they could no longer be seen Miles turned to Heber and said, "It's too bad the scoundrel slipped away from you. I'm not blaming you, mind you, only it is a bit unfortunate

that an older man was n't the one that had him here."

"A man like you?" laughed Heber good-naturedly.

"Well, he would n't have got away from me," said Miles. "But come on now. I can't waste any more time here."

• "Going to Schenectady?" inquired Heber.

"Yes; going through Schenectady. Now tell me all about it, lad."

Ignoring the air of superiority which Miles had assumed, Heber briefly related what had befallen him since he had last seen the young soldier, and then in turn demanded that Miles should relate his own experiences.

"There is n't much to tell. I took my message to General Clinton, but others had been there too. Among them were those two Oneidas who have gone after Hide Sam. I don't know whether they'll get him or not. They're good fellows and are as true as steel."

"What are their names?"

"One of them, the older one, is Hungry Wolf, and the other is Eagle's Eye. I can't tell you what it is in the Oneida lingo, but that's what it is in English. They have been on to the Onondaga villages."

"How did they find things?"


"About as bad as they could be. I tell you, lad, we've got to do something there, and right away too. That's what I told General Clinton, and before I had finished my story he agreed with me, too."

"What is it they are going to do?"

"I don't mind telling you, Heber, though I'm not telling everybody, that something is being done. Colonel Van Schaick, as perhaps you know, has gone as far as Schenectady with his regiment and already has sent on some of his men to Caughnawaga. Then at Fort Stanwix—I like Phil Schuyler, but I can't find it handy even yet to call the old fort by his name, although, as perhaps you've heard, the name of the fort has been changed—we're getting ready. If the Onondagas or the Five Nations try to make a raid in the Valley we'll be ready to stand them off. We need men, though, and I tell you, lad, you ought to join and come on. Why don't you go right on back with me, Heber? I'll look after you, and it won't be so bad to go with one of the couriers, you know. It'll help you."

"I'm thinking of going, but I don't know just when."

"Better go now. No time like this. No one knows when the trouble will begin."



"I've been up for two nights and been on the move for three days. I think a good sleep is what I need first of all."

"I can't wait for that. We men can't stop for a nap, you must understand."

"I understand," replied Heber dryly, and the conversation ceased.

They were now on the border of the little settlement of Schenectady, and in response to Heber's urgent invitation Miles accompanied him to his home, where Mrs. Otis, delighted over her son's safe return, prepared a dinner that fully satisfied even the demands of the hungry young soldiers.

As soon as Heber had related his experiences he inquired what had occurred during his absence, and his mother told him of the advance of a part of Colonel Van Schaick's regiment, and of the rumors of the forward movement which it was said Brant was planning to make into the Mohawk Valley.

It was then that Miles eagerly suggested that Heber should accompany him on his return to Fort Stanwix.

"I know my boy wants to go," said Mrs. Otis sadly, "and I want him to go too. It is a time when all our men must do their part in protecting our homes. Mr. Otis is unable

to go, but Heber is strong, and there is no reason why he should not do his part. I think it is harder for the wives and mothers, though, than it is even for the men. But we must not hold back in a time like this."

"Heber will be all right, and I'll look out for him," said Miles soberly. Mrs. Otis smiled, though her eyes were shining as she observed the expression of amusement on Heber's face, and it was finally agreed that Heber should set forth to join the men at Fort Stanwix, but that he should delay for a day or two until he had recovered from the effects of his recent experiences. With this promise Miles was forced to be content; and soon after he had eaten his dinner he departed to report to Colonel Van Schaick, and then to proceed on his long journey back to Fort Stanwix.

As for Heber, he sought his room in the loft, and for fourteen hours slept as only a wearied young soldier can sleep.

Two days later, after he had seen Colonel Van Schaick and had quickly been accepted as one of the recruits, Heber set forth alone on his journey to Fort Stanwix. He was familiar with the route he was to follow, and as no definite time had been assigned within which he must report to the commandant, he

resolved to stop for a brief time at the home of Susan Randall and learn how she had fared in the interval since he had last seen her.

It was late in the afternoon when Heber approached the well-known place, and the smoke which was rising from the chimney of the little house indicated that the family was at home. No one could be seen about the place, and as Heber drew near he had no fear of seeing any of his enemies. Susan's sympathies in the struggle he clearly understood, but he was aware also of her dislike of the Tories whom he himself most bitterly detested. George Cuck had apparently been the sole exception, and though Susan repeatedly had assured him of her detestation of the man, she had nevertheless frankly stated that he had been a frequent visitor at her home in the winter that was drawing near its close, and that his contributions of food had been most acceptable to the family.

Heber Otis, however, was convinced that the treacherous young Tory would not venture to delay in the region, now that the attempt upon the life of General Schuyler was known, though it was not probable that any one besides himself knew of George Cuck's part in the plot. But George Cuck knew of it; and

Heber confidently believed the Tory would not remain in the region, in view of the excitement and anger which the plot had aroused among the many friends of the persecuted leader of the Whigs of the Mohawk Valley.

There was a brief delay before the door was opened in response to Heber's knock, and it was Susan Randall herself then that stood before him. Ignoring the constraint or confusion of the girl Heber entered the room, where the entire family was assembled about the supper table. His coming was greeted by a shout from the children, who ran to meet him, and laughingly Heber turned to Susan and said: —

“Well, Jemima, you don't seem to be very glad to see me.”

“I'm not,” said the girl slowly, and if Heber had not been so interested in his own arrival he might have seen that his friend was indeed seriously troubled.

“I can go right on, Jemima, if you want me to,” said Heber with a laugh as he placed his rifle and snowshoes in the familiar corner of the room.

“I want you to,” said Susan soberly.

“Not before he has had some supper,” suggested Mrs. Randall.

"Thank you," laughed Heber, starting at once toward a vacant place at the table. "I'm taking somebody's place," he exclaimed, as he perceived that an uncleared plate was before him.

"No, no. That's your place, Heber," said Mrs. Randall. "I'll have it ready for you in a minute."

Susan Randall did not offer to assist her mother, and the nervous actions of the woman were not noticed by Heber, as he quickly took the place which speedily was made ready for him. Susan's demeanor he explained to himself by recalling her words on the occasion of his former visits. Sometimes she would apparently be glad to see him, and her manner would be as light-hearted as the vivacious girl could make it, but at other times she would be silent and seldom speak even to reply to his questions. And now he attributed her apparent failure to welcome him to the fact that she was in one of her "moods." Determined to ignore her manner, Heber was soon busily engaged in his task and lightly describing some of the recent events at Schenectady, in which he knew his hearers would be interested.

"By the way," he added at the close of an

account of his attempts to cook his own breakfast that very morning, "have you heard that the Tories tried to kill General Schuyler? They got an Indian to steal into his house and the redskin hid himself in the hall. One of the maids happened to see him, and her quick wit saved her master's life."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Susan. "Did they get the Indian?"

"They have n't got him yet, but they will. They know who he is and are after him. They knew who sent him, too," he added significantly.

"Who was it?" inquired Susan, looking straight into Heber's face as she spoke.

"It was George Cuck," replied Heber quietly.

"Why, George Cuck is here now!" exclaimed one of the children. "He's right in that room," she added, pointing to the room behind Heber.

CHAPTER X

AT THE WORD OF THE TORY

INSTANTLY Heber leaped to his feet, and seizing his rifle stood facing the door to which the child had referred. The door itself was closed, however, and there was nothing to indicate that his enemy was near. Turning toward the family, the expression he beheld on the face of Susan and her mother quickly convinced him that the little girl had spoken truly, and that the Tory had indeed been in the house when he himself had come, and perhaps even now was concealed in the room behind the closed door. Physically George Cuck was no coward, and Heber was puzzled to understand why the man had hesitated to show himself. It might be that he had been listening to what had been said, or that he was fearful that Heber was not alone, and was waiting to ascertain before he appeared.

A feeling of fierce and unreasonable rage surged up in Heber's heart, and looking angrily at Susan he said, "So that is what you would do, is it? You get me inside

your house and then have that scoundrel hidden where he can shoot me in the back ? ”

“ I did not ask you to come here, Heber Otis ! ” retorted Susan, her eyes shining as she spoke.

“ Perhaps you did n’t, but you never gave me one word of warning. You let him hide here and never tell me that he is anywhere near the house. I did n’t believe you could do such a — such a trick ! ” said Heber bitterly.

“ I did n’t do any ‘trick.’ I told you I was n’t glad to see you, and I was n’t. It seems to me we have had trouble enough here, since this terrible war started, without your making it all the harder for us.”

“ George Cuck has been very good to us this winter,” broke in Mrs. Randall, her voice trembling as she spoke. “ I don’t know what we should have done without him. He has — ”

“ You can’t tell me any good thing about him,” interrupted Heber savagely. “ He’s the worst man in all the Mohawk Valley. I’d shoot him on sight as I would a skunk ! And I’ll do it now,” he added savagely, turning to the door as he spoke.

Mrs. Randall screamed, but no one else spoke, and Heber was too excited to perceive

the pallor that spread over Susan's face. One strong pull upon the door revealed the fact that it had been fastened, and after another savage wrench upon it Heber ran swiftly out of the house to the window of the room that opened toward the road. The window itself was closed, but foot-prints were to be seen in the snow beneath it, and to all appearances they were fresh. One quick glance convinced Heber that the marks led toward the road in the Valley, but he was too excited to pause now. Cautiously he approached the window, which was on a level with his face, and peered within. He hastily dodged back, but as no response was made to his action, he repeated the attempt to peer within several times, until he became convinced that no one was likely to harm him.

Hesitating a moment, he gazed intently all about the yard in front of the house, but, as he was not able to discover any one near, he again turned to the window. Placing his gun against the side of the house, he lifted the rude sash, which readily yielded; and in a moment after he had thrust his rifle within the room, clambered in himself, and then dropped the sash into its place.

Elated that his entrance had not been dis-

puted, Heber made a hasty examination of the room itself, and was speedily convinced that George Cuck was not hidden anywhere within it. Advancing to the door, he turned the button, and once more entered the room where the family was still seated at the table, though it was manifest that no one had been eating since his departure.

Susan's eyes were filled with tears, but bravely striving to conceal her feelings she said tartly, —

“ Well, did you find him ? ”

“ I did not. You need n't feel so bad. He's got away this time. He's run for the road. Next time he may not be so fortunate.”

“ You talk very big now that he's gone,” retorted Susan.

“ Susan! Susan!” began her mother in a mild protest.

“ I don't care! I'm glad they did n't meet here.”

“ I'll remember next time, if I ever stop here, again,” said Heber loudly. “ I'll take a good look about the place before I try to come in.”

“ Do so! Do so, by all means, Mr. Otis!” exclaimed the girl with flashing eyes. “ It will be safer, a good bit safer, if you'll do that.”

"Susan —" began her mother again softly.

"Good-by," interrupted Heber bitterly. "I'll know where to look for the scoundrel next time. Every one to his taste!" And taking his snowshoes, Heber departed from the house.

His feeling of anger gradually cooled as he sped forward over the snow, and had it not been for the oncoming night Heber would have returned and apologized for his rudeness. In his heart he could not believe that George Cuck's frequent visits were welcome in the Randall household, in spite of the aid the Tory had given during the trying winter, that now was nearly gone. Still Susan ought to have warned him, Heber assured himself, and not permitted him to incur the danger he had escaped. Had Susan been aware of the Tory's flight? Her mother's agitation plainly indicated that she at least had been fearful of an encounter between the two young men. But had Susan known? Heber pondered long over the question as he walked swiftly over the snow, but no satisfactory answer was found.

When an hour had elapsed, he began to look ahead for the house of the Towners,— a family which he knew to be true to the colonies,— where he would find rest for the night.

The darkness had deepened by this time, and though the snow enabled him to find his way without difficulty, still he was eager to gain the shelter he was seeking. Muscular and vigorous as he was, the long journey had begun to weary him, and the reaction from his recent excitement had left him in a state of mind in which his longing to be safe within the Towners' house was becoming more and more intense. Not a glimpse of the clearing had he as yet been able to obtain, and quickening the pace at which he was moving Heber began to walk more swiftly.

At last he could see the house in the distance before him. Like many houses in the Mohawk Valley, it was located far back from the roadway, and the approach to it was by a lane that led through the cleared fields. As he left the road, Heber stooped to let down the bars that were at the entrance of the lane, and so was unaware of the presence of the man who at that moment darted from behind the bushes and silently stole up behind the young soldier.

"You'll come with me. The Towners don't want to see you."

Startled by the hail, Heber quickly turned and found himself face to face with George

Cuck, the latter with his rifle held in both hands and ready for instant use. For a moment the two young men gazed at each other in silence.

It was George Cuck who broke in first as he said, "I'd a good mind to drop you in your tracks. There's a good price for scalps, and even for yours I'd 'a' got something."

"Why didn't you?"

"Because I happened to think I could use you better in other ways. Now hand that gun o' yours to me."

Aware that he was in the power of the man, Heber did as he was bidden.

"Now then, we won't stop at the Towners', if you please. We'll just turn about and go to a place where I happen to know they'll be a sight more glad to see you than ever the Towners would. I'll let you go in front o' me, but don't you forget I'm not far behind and I've got two guns to your none. I'll guide ye as if you was an ox team. Haw, there. That's right. Now a little more. That's better," he added tauntingly as Heber obeyed his directions.

In silence for a time the two proceeded back over the way by which Heber had come. In spite of his anger Heber was aware of

his own helplessness. He even found himself wondering why it was that George Cuck had not shot him, for doubtless the Tory had been following him ever since his departure from the Randalls'. Blaming himself for not having been more mindful of that very peril, Heber nevertheless determined that he would not give his enemy an opportunity to harm him now, and by quietly acquiescing in the demands George Cuck might make upon him he would be the better prepared to take advantage of any opportunity that might arise.

Heber's hopes, however, were dashed when after a walk of a few minutes George Cuck commanded him to halt, and in response to the Tory's low whistle a second man was seen approaching from the forest. As the man drew nearer Heber recognized him as Jake — George Cuck's companion in the house from which Hide Sam had been sent. The appearance of the second man was startling to Heber, but the quick command of George Cuck was even more so.

"I've found him, Jake. I did n't shoot him as I told you I would, for I've thought of something better for him. Shooting is too good. Now take that strap and tie his hands behind his back."

"I can't walk if you do that," said Heber.

"Crawl, then," laughed the Tory. "I don't care what you do so long as you do what I tell you. That's right, Jake," he added, turning to his companion. "Got him good an' tight? All right then, we'll go ahead."

The party, at George Cuck's direction, left the road and turned into the forest. In silence Jake led the way while George Cuck followed in the rear, Heber being compelled to walk between the two. The way was more difficult now, and after twice almost falling, Heber at last lost his balance and pitched forward into the snow. He was unable to extricate himself, and Jake was compelled to lift him to his feet once more.

It was plain that George Cuck was eager to make haste, although Heber had no conception of what the destination was to be. He realized, from the direction in which they were moving, that it was almost at right angles with the main thoroughfare, and that it was toward the wilderness. If George Cuck was desirous of haste, then his desire was a good reason for delay on his own part, Heber concluded; and several times he purposely fell, again to be lifted by the huge Jake and reviled and threatened by the angry Tory.

In this manner the party proceeded for what Heber conjectured must be a distance of four or five miles. The Tory had objected to the slow pace at which they were moving, and there were times when Heber, despite his purpose to delay, was compelled to move swiftly. At last a halt was made, and a brief conversation took place between George Cuck and Jake; but the young prisoner was unable to hear what was said.

As soon as the Tory had finished speaking, he abruptly departed; but Heber was aware that he did not plan to be gone long, for he left in Jake's keeping the rifle which he had compelled his prisoner to give up. As he went he said to Heber, "I'm going to meet some of your friends. They'll come back with me and I'll turn you over to them. Ever hear of Little Aaron?"

Heber had heard of the famous chief, and his bloodthirsty deeds were well known among the settlers. It was difficult to believe the implied threat to turn him over to the tender mercies of the savage, and yet a new fear swept upon Heber at the question. However, he made no response, and George Cuck abruptly departed.

"Jake," said Heber, after the Tory had been

gone several minutes and the two men had seated themselves in a sheltered spot, "did you ever tell George Cuck what I said to you when we were in that house where you burned my snowshoes?"

"I did."

"Well, I want to tell you something more. I met Tim Murphy after you left me."

"What did he have to say for himself?"

"He said he'd wing you and George Cuck too if he had to leave the army to do it."

"Did he say that?" demanded Jake, apparently amused by the words.

"He surely did. I would n't give much for your chances, Jake."

"Where is Tim now?"

"He may be on your track for all I know. If he is n't, he will be, Jake," Heber added. "Why don't you let me go?"

"Ha! ha!" roared the man. "That's a good one. I'll tell George when he comes back with Little Aaron. Let you go, is it? Ha! ha! ha!"

"It would be better if you did."

"Tim Murphy'll have all he wants to look after himself. He won't bother me."

It was useless to attempt to persuade the stupid man to let him go, and Heber became

silent. If his hands were only free, he thought, he would make an effort to break away from his guard, but as it was he was apparently helpless. The prospect of the return of George Cuck with the chief was one that also seriously troubled Heber, for Jake's words had confirmed the implied threat which his captor had made.

Jake meanwhile had risen and advanced a few yards into the forest, where he stood apparently listening to sounds that Heber could not hear. The burly back of the man could be plainly seen, and acting upon a sudden impulse Heber arose and noiselessly darted into the woods behind him. He had fled but a few yards, however, when a shout from Jake revealed the fact that his flight had been discovered.

CHAPTER XI

A MEETING IN THE FOREST

HEBER as he fled into the forest was positive that he heard the voices of men behind him, and instantly concluded that George Cuck must have come back, and perhaps had brought Little Aaron and other warriors with him. The thought increased the fear in Heber's heart, for he was aware that he could expect no mercy from his pursuers if they should discover or overtake him. His hands were still bound behind his back, and the slightest mishap might cause him to fall and be almost helpless to rise and resume his flight.

In spite of the speed at which he was running, Heber endeavored to select his course with care, avoiding the brush and selecting the more open spaces. He was positive by this time that his flight was known, and equally certain that the pursuit had begun. In the light of day it would be easy to trace him by the imprints of his snowshoes on the snow; but there was a possibility that in the dimmer

light of the night, and with the snow less clear than it was in the open country, he might be able to confuse or at least delay his pursuers until he had gained a good start, and in that event Heber's fears would be slighter, for his fleetness of foot was one of his most marked possessions.

Not a sound could be heard now as Heber fled on through the forest. Fortunately he had met with no accident, and the swiftness of his flight began to increase his hopefulness, as it also strengthened his determination to do his utmost. On and still on he sped, never once glancing behind him, and breathing heavily in his exertions. His flight now was leading him up the side of a little knoll, and he was unable to perceive what lay beyond it. The ground here was clearer, however, and Heber's first hope of safety rested upon his ability to outstrip the men behind him at the outset of the chase. Swiftly he made his way up the side of the little hill, and as he gained its summit, directly in his pathway below him he saw a hollow which a "windfall" had made. A huge tree had been upturned by the wind, and its roots had been broken sharply off only a few feet below the ground. The mass of roots stood like a rampart directly

below him, leaving a hollow between them and the bank from which they had been torn. Into this small hollow a mass of drifted snow and dead leaves had been blown; and unable to check his speed or change the direction of his flight, Heber plunged over the bank and fell directly upon the mass below him. As he fell the strings of one of his snowshoes snapped, and at the same time the wrench upon his arms freed one of his hands from the bands by which it had been fastened behind his back.

Otherwise unharmed by his fall, Heber instantly crawled back under the projecting bank, and drawing himself as close as was possible to the sheltering side lay motionless and silent. Further flight had been made impossible by the snapping of the strings of his snowshoe, and though the possibility that his hiding-place would long be undiscovered was not strong, it was his sole hope and reliance at the time.

Striving to still the loud beating of his heart, with every sense alert, Heber waited. His arms were now free, but they were so numb as to be almost helpless. He had no weapon, even the hunting knife which he had carried having been taken from him

after his capture, and resistance to his pursuers, if they should discover him, would be almost impossible.

Excited and trembling, and yet determined not to be retaken without a struggle, Heber waited, and only a few moments had elapsed when he could plainly hear the voices of approaching men. Up the side of the knoll came the pursuers, and upon the border of the hollow, directly above the place where Heber was crouching, they halted for a moment.

Heber's fears returned, and all thought of escaping was gone. Still he pressed more closely against the earth, and strove to keep himself out of sight.

"This was the way he came, I know it was." It was Jake who was speaking, and Heber could hear every word that was uttered.

"Sure of it, you lubber?" demanded George Cuck angrily. "You let him get away from you, and you ought to know. If he came this way, where is he now?"

"He did n't stop, you can be sure of that," replied Jake humbly.

"Come here. Go that way." It was the guttural voice of an Indian that now spoke, and Heber was convinced that it must be that of Little Aaron.

The presence of the well-known chief did not allay the alarm of the crouching fugitive, but even his fears were not afforded time for recognition. George Cuck spoke again, and said hastily : —

“Are you sure, Aaron?”

“Yes, Aaron sure. See him trail.”

“All right. We mustn’t lose a minute here, then. We’d better spread out. Jake, you are the slowest; you keep right on ahead. Aaron, you go off to the right, and I’ll take the left. We’ll both work in a bit, and between the three of us we’ll drive him in. He can’t go as fast as we can; his hands are tied behind his back. At least they were if Jake did n’t make as poor a job of that as he did of guarding him. Get him alive if you can, and we ought to get him that way if he can’t defend himself. But *get* him anyway, dead or alive. Now then!”

Heber could hear the men as they departed from the knoll, and in a brief time the silence had returned. To Heber it seemed almost impossible that the keen-eyed Aaron should have gone without discovering his presence. But the stillness certainly indicated that no one was near. It could not be long, however, before they would know that his flight had

not extended beyond the place where he was then concealed, and at the thought Heber crawled cautiously forth from his hiding-place.

Peering over the edge of the bank, he was unable to perceive any one, and then grasping his snowshoes in one hand, he speedily withdrew and began to run. Avoiding the places where the snow was deepest, he sped forward, taking slight thought of the direction in which he was moving, eager only to place the greatest possible distance between himself and the men whose voices he had overheard.

It was not long before, to Heber's intense surprise, he found himself near the very spot from which he had fled. The fire of logs was still burning, but not a person could be discerned. Quickly Heber darted to the place, and a hasty search revealed his own rifle still leaning against the tree where Jake had left it. As he looked about him, Heber also discovered a pair of snow-shoes, — doubtless an additional pair that George Cuck had brought in case of accident, — and after a hasty inspection he instantly appropriated them, at the same time flinging his own far into the forest at one side.

Seating himself upon the ground, Heber, with hands trembling in his eagerness, began

to bind the shoes upon his own feet. The task was quickly accomplished, and then standing erect he looked about him once more as he prepared to flee from the spot.

"Me bye! Me bye! Me long lost Haber!"

Heber turned instantly at the startling exclamation, and beheld two men approaching from the forest. It was impossible in the dim light to recognize them from their forms, but the voice could be none other than that of Timothy Murphy. Heber's conviction was confirmed when the Irishman himself advanced within the light of the fire, and with him was another man whom he quickly recognized as Joe Elerson, another member of Morgan's riflemen that had been left at Cherry Valley when the Burgoyne campaign had been ended.

"'T is mortal careless o' yez," said Timothy reproachfully, "to be afther standin' there in the loight o' that foire. What hinders some one in the woods from pickin' yez off, an' he niver exposin' himsilf at all?"

"Tim! Tim!" said Heber excitedly in a low voice, "George Cuck is here, and Jake and Little Aaron too. I have just got away from them. They're looking for me now, and all three of them may come back here any minute."

"George Cuck, is it?" whispered Timothy, instantly glancing keenly all about the adjacent forest. "An' Jake! Ach! Th' saints be praised! 'T is Timothy Murphy, bedad, what wants t' mate th' both o' thim. Whin did yez say they're coming back, Haber?"

"I don't know. I did n't say," said Heber excitedly. And in a low voice he briefly related to his friend his recent experiences.

"We're in th' nick o' toime, Joe, me darlint," whispered Timothy to his comrade. "'T is this same George Cuck we do be wantin' to lay our hands on, an' here he is jist waitin' for us t' come an' take him. Haber, lad, was it Little Aaron what tried th' thrick on Gin'ral Phil?"

"No, no. We must n't stand here in the light of this fire, Tim."

"No more we must n't," assented the Irishman. "Now me own plan is for the three o' us to divide up and hide an' wait for th' rapscallions to come back an' lit us put our hands on 'em. I don't suppose th' gin'ral jist at this toime would be afther lettin' us put a streak o' daylight into what Little Aaron calls his hearrt, but th' two ithers is wanted mortal bad by meself an' th' gin'ral too. Me an' the gin'ral most always agrees 'bout most things,

savin' only what th' thavin' Senecas an' Mo-hawks deserve."

"Don't talk any more. You hide out there on one side and I'll take the other, and Joe can go back the way he came and hide behind the first big tree."

"Listen t' th' bye," retorted Timothy. "Jist listen, will yez! Ah! th' hid he's got on th' two shoulders o' him. He's nixt t' th' gin'ral an' me, an' Oi have me doubts —"

"Come on, Tim," interrupted Heber. "They may be back any minute."

"Th' sooner th' better," responded the Irishman, looking carefully to the priming of his rifle with the two barrels. "Now, Joe," he added, "yez know what yer own part is. Don't yez be scart, Joe, for jist remimber yez have Haber Otis an' Tim Murphy by yer soide."

In spite of the rifleman's apparent carelessness he was continually observant, as Heber well knew, and it was he who pointed out the exact spot which was to be occupied by each man. Then at Timothy's bidding Heber and Joe Elerson retired to the trees which had been assigned to them, and in a brief time the silence of the great forest had returned. The blazing logs ceased to throw upward their tongues of flame, and the wind was rising and

sounded mournfully as it swayed the bare branches ; but when a half hour had elapsed Heber Otis began to feel impatient. He had been confident that his captors would return for the rifle, and the snowshoes were of too great value to be rashly abandoned. But not a sign of the men for whom he and his companions had been waiting could be seen.

Heber was about to advance to the place where Timothy was concealed and urge an immediate departure, when he was startled by the sight of the huge Jake striding toward the fire. The Tory was talking, and Heber peered eagerly behind him to discover the other men ; but as Jake drew near the burning logs and no one else could be seen, the young soldier quickly decided that the man was alone and his conversation was with himself. Indeed, as Jake began to move about, plainly searching for some object which he was unable to find, his words became more frequent and his mutterings betrayed his disappointment. It was not difficult for Heber to conjecture what it was that the man was searching for, and he grimly clasped his rifle more tightly in his hands.

Neither George Cuck nor Little Aaron had appeared, and convinced that they were not

coming, Heber boldly advanced toward the fire. With an exclamation of surprise, Jake gazed at the young soldier as if he was not fully aware who it was that was standing before him.

"Well, Jake, what are you looking for?" demanded Heber, who was holding his rifle with both hands, prepared to use it instantly should occasion demand. The presence of his two allies gave him an additional feeling of security, and the surprise of the huge man seemed almost ludicrous.

"Did n't you run away?" demanded Jake slowly.

"Where are George Cuck and Little Aaron?" inquired Heber, ignoring the question.

"They are not here. They did n't come back."

"So I see; but where are they now?"

"George won't think I'm such a fool as he tells me I am, when he sees me bringing you with me."

"Am I going with you?" laughed Heber. "I did n't know that."

"Of course you are going. I'll tie your hands again now," said Jake as he began to move toward Heber.

"Jake," demanded Heber, as he backed away, "did n't I tell you that Tim Murphy would never forgive you if you harmed me?"

"Tim is n't here," replied the giant slyly. "He's a great shot, but he can't draw a bead on me when he's in Cherry Valley, can he?"

"Yes, sir, he can, and he will if you take another step forward." Heber spoke somewhat more loudly than before, although he was aware that Timothy could hear all that was said.

"Ha! ha!" roared Jake. "You've got to come with me and no mistake. George will be better now. He won't say I'm such a fool—"

"Me bye, I've got yez an' don't yez make anny mistake," roared the Irishman, advancing to the fire as he spoke.

For an instant Jake gazed in astonishment, and then with a wild shout turned and darted into the forest.

CHAPTER XII

REËNFORCEMENTS

"TAKE after him!" exclaimed Timothy, intensely excited, and at once starting in pursuit of the fleeing Jacob.

"Tim," said Heber in a low voice, as he and Joe Elerson instantly followed the angry Irishman, "Little Aaron and George Cuck are here in these woods somewhere. You must n't forget that."

"Forgit? 'Tis th' sight o' thim me owld eyes is hungerin' for. Come on!"

Despite his fear that the Tory and his Indian companion might be able to fire at them when they were running through the forest, Heber continued by Tim's side without speaking, but they had not gone far before they saw the huge Jake on the ground before them. He was on his hands and knees, and was facing the men much like an animal at bay.

"Arragh there, me bye!" shouted Timothy as he brought his gun to his shoulder. "'Tis a good position for yez. 'Tis not often one finds a Tory on his knees."

Jake's rifle was far to one side and apparently had been flung away. The man himself did not reply to the Irishman's hail, but the expression of fear in his eyes plainly indicated his terror at the approach of Timothy.

"Stand up!" ordered Timothy sharply.

"I can't stand," replied Jake.

"Why not can't yez? Oi'll tickle yez wid me roifle. That'll help yez a bit."

"I've hurt my ankle," groaned Jake. "I can't stand on it. I fell. I can't walk a step."

"Sure an' that's too bad an'such a long walk ahid o' yez. Maybe Oi'd better put yez out o' yer mis'ry now." As he spoke Timothy once more lifted his rifle to his shoulder.

"I'll try. I'll do my best," responded Jake quickly with a groan. By a great effort he arose from his position and stood peering into the Irishman's face with an expression of terror that would have been ludicrous under other circumstances.

"'Tis very well yez be doin'," declared Timothy cordially. "Now if yez can't use yer two feet jist try the one o' thim, for it's come wid us yez must. Oi mane it. Iv'ry wurrd is as true as th' saints."

"I can't go," pleaded Jake dolefully. The

huge fellow was almost in tears, and his suffering at once appealed to Heber. "Let him go, Tim," he suggested. We've got ourselves to look after."

"Niver a bit, me bye! This man goes with us or I lave his did corpse on the snow here. Now thin which shall it be?" he added, turning sharply to the man.

"I'll go. I'll try it," said Jake eagerly.

"That's good o' yez," replied Timothy as a broad grin spread over his face. "See that yez kape up wid th' line o' march," he added warningly, and at once the men turned back from the spot.

Nothing had as yet been seen of George Cuck or Little Aaron, but the eagerness in Heber's heart to be gone was not lightened by the failure of the Tory or his Indian companion to appear. The peril was by no means gone, and even Timothy Murphy appeared to be aware of it, for he moved swiftly forward, and the prisoner, though manifestly every step caused him pain, was doing his utmost to keep up with the pace. He offered no further resistance, however; and although several times he stumbled and fell, the departure from the forest was only slightly delayed, and at last the little force once more gained the roadway.

It was daylight by this time, and the fear of a pursuit in the open road was less keen than it had been in the depths of the forest.

"What are we going to do now, Tim?" inquired Heber.

"Goin' straight t' Fort Stanwix, me bye."

"But Jake can't go as far as that," Heber protested.

"No more he can't."

"Where shall we leave him?"

"We'll let him stop at Johnstown. Bedad, an' he'll have a foine toime there, Oi'm thinkin'," said Timothy with a broad grin on his face. "They're waitin' for him, Oi hear," he added. "If only that Tory, George Cuck, had coom along wid us Oi'm thinkin' they'd be after havin' as good fun as if they'd attinded th' wake o' th' divil."

"Why do they want him?"

"Listen, me bye. Now spake up, Jake," he added, turning to his prisoner. "Did yez iver come back here 'long wid th' men what dug up th' iron chist o' th' Johnsons?"

"How did you know that?" demanded Jake, his dull eyes opening wide with astonishment.

"Oh, Jacob Helmer is wanted for that same," laughed Timothy. "Don't yez be

scart. If yez think Timothy Murphy is a bad one, Oi don' know what yez'll think whin th' min at Johnstown git hould o' yez. Oi'm thinkin' 't would be a marcy to yez now jist t' put yez out o' yer fear an' trimblin'." As he spoke, Timothy turned his rifle in his hands as if he was sorely tempted to use it.

But the prisoner did not speak, and if his alarm at the implied threat was strong he did not reveal it by his manner.

"We must be marchin' on t' vict'ry an' th' grave, as the tune says," declared Timothy. "Oi'd loike a bit t' ate, but me feelin's prevint me from stoppin'. So we'll jist prosade t' go ahid. What's that?" he added quickly, as he turned to observe three men approaching up the road. One of the trio was evidently a white man, and the two with him were Indians; but the first thought, that George Cuck himself might be in pursuit of them, quickly gave place to another as Heber recognized the newcomers as Miles Sprague and the two Oneidas whom he had before seen with him.

"Do yez know thim, me bye?" whispered Timothy.

"Yes. It's Miles Sprague. He's from Fort Stanwix, and the two redskins are both

Oneidas. They 're brothers — Hungry Wolf and Eagle Eye."

"Th' saints be praised!" exclaimed Timothy in relief. "'T is a good lift they'll be afther givin' us. Spake up, Joe, me darlint," he added, turning to the member of Morgan's rifle corps by his side. "'T is a wurrd o' welcome yez must be after givin' 'em, for ray-cruits is what we nade."

Joe Elerson, who had scarcely spoken a word since Heber had first seen him, stared first at Timothy and then at the approaching party. His lips moved as if he was striving to say something, but not a sound did he utter. "'T is a harrd job, Haber, t' kape me frind Joe from talkin' too much," laughed Timothy. "His tongue do be hung in th' middle an' it wurks both ways at once."

"I had n't thought it, Tim," said Heber. "Now if you had said that about yourself, I'd —"

"Ah, yis, Oi understand yez parfectly, Haber Otis," interrupted the Irishman. "Don't yez say another wurrd, except t' these min what are comin'. Oi'll do me best t' kape Joe still while yez are talkin' wid 'em."

The approaching party was now so near that Miles had recognized Heber, and the

suspicion which he had plainly entertained quickly departed as he said, "Why, it's little Heber!"

"So it seems. And this is big Miles," responded Heber dryly. He presented the newcomers to his companions, and then said, "I thought you were at Fort Stanwix by this time."

"So I should have been, but I had to stop and arrange some things with General Clinton and Colonel Van Schaick."

"Have you seen or heard anything of General Schuyler?"

"Yes. I saw him again. He's all right. They have n't caught the redskin that almost did for him, though."

"Do they know who it was?"

"No. I have n't been able to find out."

"Ask Haber here," interposed Timothy quickly. "He has a hid on him that houlds a thing or two."

"Do you know, lad?" demanded Miles quickly.

"Yes. It was Hide Sam."

"Why did n't you tell me?" demanded Miles sharply.

"I did tell the colonel. I did n't know that you were specially interested."

"He did n't tell me nor Gin'ral Washington nor Gin'ral Lafite [La Fayette] nor yit Gin'ral Phil himsilf, so don't yez be hurrt because he did n't happen t' think o' yez in th' con-niction," suggested Timothy solemnly.

For a moment Miles stared angrily at the Irishman, and then said, "And who are you? I did n't quite catch your name."

"Me name is Timothy Murphy an' Oi'm—"

"Are you Tim Murphy, the rifleman?" in-
terrupted Miles quickly.

"Oi am that. An' so is me frind, Joe Eler-son, here."

"I am glad to meet you," exclaimed Miles delightedly. "I have heard a great deal about you."

"Same to you," responded Timothy graciously. "Did Oi understand yez t' say yez were thinkin' o' joinin' th' army?"

"I am in the army now. I'm on important business," said Miles sharply.

"Faith an' Oi would n't 'a' belaved it!" ex-claimed Timothy in apparent admiration. "An' can yez foight?" he added graciously.

Miles's face flushed a dark red, as he turned to Heber and inquired how it was that he chanced to be in the road at that time in the morning.

Heber briefly related what had befallen him, and when he had ended Miles said: "And you had George Cuck right in your hands, you say? And you let him go? What a pity that I was not there."

"It is thot," exclaimed Timothy warmly. "If George Cuck had once set his two eyes on th' likes o' yez he'd niver 'a' tried to rin away at all."

"What are you going to do with that man?" demanded Miles, apparently ignoring the feelings of Timothy.

"Take him t' Johnstown."

"Good! We're going that way too, and we'll help keep him from getting away the way George Cuck did."

"An' is it sure yez arre that Gin'ral Clinton will mate yez there?" inquired Timothy innocently.

"He did n't expect to meet me there," said Miles.

"Thin it's not disappointed he'll be. Come on thin, colonel. Oi think it's colonel yez said yez be, I dunno?" Timothy asked.

Heber laughed, but the face of Miles was in no way responsive when the party resumed their advance. There was greater confidence now because of the increased numbers, and

despite the accident which had befallen Jake good progress was made ; so that late that night they arrived at Johnstown, where their huge prisoner was at once delivered into the hands of the proper authorities, Jake himself submitting with the grace with which an ox is led to the slaughter.

On the following morning, Miles came to the house in which Heber and the two Irishmen were lodged, and as soon as he was admitted said with an air of great importance, "I have a commission for you, Heber."

"Faith, an' it's about toime th' lad had it," exclaimed Timothy. "It's mesilf what knew Gin'ral Washington could n't wait much longer afore he recognized th' hid on th' lad."

"This is n't from General Washington," explained Miles. "It's just a little work that we are to do as we go on to Fort Stanwix. You can help too, Tim, and Joe Elerson is a good man, so we can take him with us too."

"That's kind o' yez," replied Timothy, smiling broadly. "An' what is th' wurrk yez would be afther havin' us do, I dunno?"

"It's this way, Tim," explained Miles, unaware of the Irishman's quiet manner of making sport of his pretensions. "Up near Catskill there is a man whose house is a rallying place

for the redskins and the men who are going to join Butler. We may find George Cuck there, for all we know, for I haven't a question that he is on his way to join the Greens now."

"An' what are we to do?" inquired Timothy, interested at once.

"We're to take this man — his name is Service, I think — and make him go with us to Fort Stanwix. If anything suspicious is found in his house, we're to take that, too, as well as any other Tories we may chance to find skulking about the place."

"An' is it yersilf that's t' be the gin'ral o' th' expedition?" demanded the Irishman.

"Not exactly, though of course I shall go along," responded Miles. "You see it is right in the way we're to follow, and it won't delay us or take us out of the road very far, either."

"How many are going?" inquired Heber.

"Oh, there will be ten or twelve of us," said Miles lightly. "Our men are all moving toward Fort Stanwix now, anyway. You needn't be afraid. There'll be enough of us to put up a good fight if we have to, and I think we shall."

"We're th' byes for yez, thin," said Timothy promptly. "Whin do we start, I dunno?"


"In about an hour," explained Miles.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CABIN OF THE TORY

WHEN at the appointed time the little band departed from Johnstown there were twelve men in the force. A Captain Long whom Heber had never seen before naturally assumed the position of leader, and as he too was to go on to Fort Stanwix there was the same interest on his part that possessed all the others. A drizzling rain was falling when the band started, and walking was difficult. At times their snowshoes proved to be of no assistance, and were discarded. As a consequence, their progress was slow; and when night fell and the men sought shelter in the house of a well-known friend of the colonies, every one was so wearied by the journey of the day that soon after dark the entire force was sleeping soundly, wherever a place could be found on the floor of the little cabin.

Early in the following morning the advance was resumed; but the road was heavy, and though the sun was shining brightly, the snow was soft and the march became ex-



ceedingly difficult. Not a complaint was heard, however, and in good spirits, in spite of the besetting difficulties, the men all kept steadily to the way. The leader, as Heber soon became aware, was a quiet man who seldom spoke, but there was an air of determination about him that was certainly inspiring. Even the loquacious Timothy seldom volunteered any of his quaint remarks, and as for his comrade, Joe Elerson, Heber had not heard a word from him more than two or three times since he had first met him in the forest.

About the middle of the afternoon the party, by the advice of Captain Long, departed from the roadway, and in order to save time and effort turned into the forest, hoping to regain the road at a distance of several miles in advance of them. They had proceeded with difficulty over half the way, when suddenly Timothy Murphy and Joe Elerson, who were in advance of the party, shouted loudly, and instantly all the remainder of the band ran forward to the place where the two riflemen had halted.

"What is it, Tim?" demanded the captain in a low voice.

"It's th' inimy. Faith, an' Joe an' mesilf saw him right there by that thicket," replied

Timothy, pointing to a clump of hazel brush as he spoke.

"How many?"

"Oi can't say, sorr," whispered the Irishman.

"More than one?"

"Indade, an' Oi can't —"

Timothy stopped abruptly as he caught sight of several men, plainly unaware of the presence of any one to be feared, and at a distance advancing toward the very spot where the man whom he and Joe Elerson had discovered had concealed himself. Acting upon the impulse which ever came first to the frontiersmen in time of peril, the entire band which Captain Long had been leading instantly sought the shelter of the adjacent trees, and consequently were not seen by the men who were now approaching.

"Wait, Tim," said the captain cautiously.

"They may be friends for all we know. We don't want to fire on our own men."

"No more we don't, sorr," admitted Timothy. "Nayther do we want t' lit th' spalpeens git th' drop on us."

"Wait! We must see. I'll hail them," said the captain.

Before he could speak, however, moved as by a common impulse, both Timothy Murphy

and Joe Elerson quickly raised their rifles and fired together. A wild cry came from the brush, and a man was seen to fall forward on his face.

Before the captain could protest, a shout from Timothy added to the confusion of the moment. The advancing men stopped abruptly, and for a moment seemed to be hesitating whether to come forward or to turn and flee for shelter. Ignoring their actions, Timothy rushed forward and turned toward him the face of the man whom he and his comrade had shot.

"'T is as Oi thought," muttered the Irishman. "'T is th' spalpeen Oi first took him for. It is Sam Smith, an' Oi knew him for the traitor he was as soon as Oi set me two oyes on him."

Meanwhile the men who had been concealed behind the trees now rushed forward to the place where Timothy was standing, and instantly upon their appearance the members of the other force turned and fled among the great trees.

"Take afther thim!" shouted Timothy excitedly as he became aware of the flight. "Don't let one o' th' murderin' Tories git away!"

"Why did you shoot this man and without orders, Tim?" demanded the captain sternly, apparently ignoring the actions of the men in the distance.

"Sure, sorr, me gun was p'inted at him an' it wint off jist as me finger touched th' trigger. But, captain, darlint, don't be afther stoppin' here. Jist order yer min to chase the traitors!" The Irishman was strongly excited, but Captain Long was determined not to be led away from what he conceived to be his duty.

"Why, sorr, me frind Joe an' me saw th' traitor aimin' at yez. He had cript out t' th' edge o' th' bushes, an' as soon as he see his frinds comin' on he was for takin' yez off. An' he 'd 'a' done it, sorr, if me frind Joe an' mesilf had n't been a bit quicker nor he," continued Timothy.

"Is that true, Joe?" demanded Captain Long quickly.

Joe Elerson nodded his head gravely in response, but did not speak, nor did he pause in the task of reloading his rifle.

"Do you know who the man is, Tim?" inquired the captain.

"Oi can't say that Oi do, sorr. But he's did now, an' his name does n't count for much."

"Does any one know him?" demanded the captain, turning to the men about him.

"Yes, sir, I know him," said Heber quietly, after he had peered into the face of the man that had fallen.

"Who is he?"

"His name is Sam Smith. He used to live over near Schoharie. He was a captain in Butler's Greens."

"Did n't Oi tell yez that same?" demanded Timothy. "Did n't Oi say Oi knew 't was that Tory rascal? Oi've see him many th' toime this winter. An' if Joe an' me had n't been quick wid our roifles Oi'm thinkin' it's yersilf, Cap'n Long, what would n't be standin' round here like a dead stump whin iv'ry mother's son o' us ought t' be chasin' th' robbers."

Apparently satisfied, as well as relieved, by the explanations he had heard, the captain quickly gave the word to pursue the men who had fled at the discharge of the rifles of Timothy and his friend.


Muttering over the delay, Timothy nevertheless was among the most eager of the band as it started swiftly in pursuit of the fugitives. Extreme caution was required, for the comrades of the man that had fallen might stop, and from the shelter of the great trees fire

upon their pursuers. The party had not advanced far, however, before it became evident from the footprints in the snow that the fugitives had scattered and were fleeing in a half-dozen different directions.

Captain Long, deeming it inadvisable for his own followers to separate, gave the word for his men to keep together and follow the traces of the three or four men who had kept directly on their way. The efforts to overtake the fleeing. Tories were now redoubled. Stumbling over fallen branches, sinking into the soft snow, plunging through great pools of water, the men all forced their way; but keen as were their efforts they had gone far, and still not a trace of the fugitives had they found except the marks they had made in the snow.

Timothy was breathing hard, and streams of perspiration were rolling down his face, but except for his frequent muttering he made no complaint.

The pursuit had lasted for an hour, and still the men whom the band was following had not been seen. Heber was wondering why the chase was still kept up, for overtaking the Tories now seemed to the young soldier to be impossible. The advantage they



had gained at the outset, when Captain Long had delayed to inquire concerning the fallen man, was not to be easily overcome. Heber was aware that the two young Oneidas who had set forth with the band from Johnstown were not now with the men, but he was too breathless to inquire the cause of their absence. On and still on he plunged through the soft snow, keeping close to his companions and watching sharply for any signs of the men whom they were following.

"Whist, captain," suddenly exclaimed Timothy in his loudest whisper. "An' what is that, I dunno?"

The men all stopped abruptly as Timothy pointed to a low house of logs that could be seen in a small clearing not far before them. Smoke was coming forth from the rude stone chimney, plainly indicating that some one was within the house.

"Does any one know what or whose house that is?" inquired the captain.

"Yes, sir. I know. I have been here before," responded Heber. "It is the house of this man Service that we are to take with us."

"Is it so?" replied Captain Long. "Then we must make sure that these men we have

been chasing have n't gone in there. If they have, we shall find our troubles in dislodging them. Heber, will you creep around to the other side and see if the tracks lead into the house? We'll all wait here till you come back and report. And every man must take care that he is not seen," he added as he turned to his followers.

Heber Otis at once departed, following the clearly defined track the fugitives had made as it led toward the forest beyond. In a brief time he returned with the report that not a footprint could be seen to indicate that the men had abandoned their flight, and that it was evident not one had stopped at the house of the man Service.

"He may not be here either," said Captain Long as Heber made his report to his companions, who now crowded eagerly about him.

" 'T is easy, sorr, to find out about that," suggested Timothy.

"What shall we do, Tim?" inquired the captain.

"Me own plan is for Joe Elerson an' me-silf to go up t' th' house an' if th' traitor be there t' bring him back here wid us."

"I'm not sure you're not right, Tim,"

replied Captain Long thoughtfully. "The rest of us will stay right here where we are, and you and Joe can go up to the house. If you need us you know where you can find us. Just call and we'll be on hand."

"Jist till Joe not t' talk too much," suggested Timothy as he and his friend at once made ready to go to the house. "'T is his tongue what may git us into trouble."

No one made any response to the words of the irrepressible Irishman, and the two men at once turned into the lane that led to the house and boldly approached the front door. Every movement could be plainly seen by their friends, who remained hidden in the forest, though all were peering out at the two Irishmen and excitedly watching them.

Coolly Timothy and his companion approached the door, and the former rapped loudly upon it. There was a momentary delay before the door was opened, and Heber could see that it was a man that had responded to the summons. The door itself was hastily closed as soon as the two men entered, and then there followed a silence that was painful in its intensity.


Heber, like his companions, watched and listened, but for a time not a sound was heard.

The curling smoke still was rising from the chimney, the beams of the late afternoon sun fell upon the pools of water and glistening snow and were almost blinding in their brightness, but the tense silence was unbroken. Several minutes elapsed before the stillness was rudely interrupted by the sound of a gun discharged within the house. Instantly every one of the waiting men turned eagerly to Captain Long, but the leader shook his head in response, and no one moved from his position. Again the silence rested over the forest, broken only by the sound of the heavy breathing of the excited, waiting band. The suspense was becoming almost unbearable to Heber, and he was about to urge Captain Long to grant him permission to go to the aid of his friend, when suddenly the door of the house was opened, and a moment later both Timothy and Joe Elerson came forth.

Their appearance was a signal for their friends, and instantly all ran forward to meet them. "What is it, Tim? Did you find your man?" inquired Heber eagerly.

"We did thot," replied the Irishman indifferently.

"Where is he? Why didn't you bring him out?" demanded Captain Long.



"He can't walk at all, at all. He's did," said Timothy soberly.

"Dead? How's that? Did you shoot? Was that what the report of the gun meant?"

"It sure did. Sarvice was there himsilf. Says I, 'Your sarvent, Misther Sarvice, and good luck to yez, for yer my prisoner, I dunno.' 'Is that so,' says he quiet like. 'It is thot,' says I. 'Thin,' says he, 'who be you?' 'Me name's Murphy, a descindent o' one o' th' kings uv Oireland,' says I. 'Not if Oi knows mesilf,' says he, and th' traitor up an' grabbed his axe and started t' make a pass at me head. But Joe here widout raisin' his roifle jist lit him have it. Sarvice is dead, Captain, me darlint, an' he's so dead he won't ever make anny complaint about it either, Oi'm thinkin'."


CHAPTER XIV

A TRANSFORMED WARRIOR

THE fact that Tories were known to be in the vicinity and that Butler's men apparently were already assembling increased the perplexity of the little band of which young Heber Otis was a member. The fate of the man Service was to be deplored, but not even Captain Long was disposed to find fault with Timothy, when the peril that had threatened the two men was understood.

After a brief consultation it was decided not to pursue the Tories that had scattered at the approach of the little force, and the captain said, "I want some one to go with me into Service's house. We may find something there that will prove of value to us. I'll ask you to go with me, Heber. You are a good one to read writing, and if we do find anything we shall not want to remain here."

Accordingly Heber and the leader at once advanced to the house and entering began a thorough search. The sight of the body of the fallen man caused Heber to turn away



with a shudder. Doubtless it was all a part of the horrors of the war, and Timothy and Joe were to be commended for their prompt action, for if Service had not fallen one or both of the Irishmen would have suffered at his hands. But the sight of the upturned face and the motionless form was disquieting, to state it mildly, and as Heber turned to a rude desk in the room his hands were trembling in his excitement. His companion had sought the one other room which the little house contained, and as a consequence Heber was alone, except for the body of the Tory.

The sight of a few papers in the desk, when he lifted the cover, at once claimed his attention; and as he lifted the uppermost one and began to read, his interest was instantly aroused. It was a brief note before him, but it was addressed to George Cuck, and the initials signed at the end were "S. R." There was no hesitation in doing what under other circumstances Heber would not even have thought of, and he began to read.

Cum as soon as you can. H. O. has been here and will be here agen. I don't know when. But cum, George. You must cum. Don't wait, Cum. S. R.

It was evident that Susan had sent word by some one for the young Tory to come to her home. Who the "H. O." was, to whom reference had been made in the note, he bitterly thought he was able to conjecture. No date was in the letter, but it did not occur to Heber that the appeal might have been sent weeks before this time. A feeling of intense anger against "Jemima," as well as George Cuck, arose in his heart. The girl was certainly playing him false. Here was direct evidence of her treachery, or so Heber defined her action in his anger. Hastily he thrust the note into his pocket, and then continued his search. The only other item of importance that was found was another note signed "G. C." — initials sufficient of themselves to the young soldier in his present attitude of mind to increase his rage.

The words of the letter, however, were read with difficulty, and the message was for Colonel Butler. The latter name served for a moment to divert Heber's thoughts, and after some difficulty he made out sufficient for him to understand that "G. C." had left a message with Service to deliver to Walter Butler, that some of "G. C.'s" friends would meet the colonel at a place which was not

decipherable, at least by Heber. This note too was without date. Nothing else of importance was found in the room, and when the captain returned, Heber in response to his query merely handed him the second note he had found, retaining the other one, however, which he had placed safely within his own pocket.

"I did n't find much of anything, either," explained the captain, when he had carefully inspected the paper which Heber placed in his hands. "I don't believe this amounts to much," he added. "It's probably an old one, and even if it is n't, we'll do more to push on for Fort Stanwix than we will to wait here."

"How would it do for Tim and me to stay here in this house till to-morrow?" inquired Heber. "Probably some of the men we saw were coming here to take their directions from this fellow;" and as Heber spoke he glanced at the body of the dead Tory. "Tim and I might learn something, and if we don't we can follow you to-morrow, and we'll probably overtake you before you get to Fort Stanwix. We've nothing to lose and perhaps something to gain," added Heber eagerly, as a vague thought that the note in his pocket might imply that a certain young Tory whom he was most desirous of meeting might appear there.

"I have no objection," said the captain after a brief hesitation. "I have confidence in you both, and if Tim agrees I'll not oppose."

"We'll leave it to Tim, then," said Heber quickly.

When the two men rejoined their comrades and Heber's suggestion was explained to the Irishman, Timothy's response was hearty, although he demanded that Joe Elerson should also be one of the party to stay in the house.

The suggestion was agreed to; and, while the rest of the men remained with Captain Long, Heber and the two Irishmen at once sought the shelter of the house. Their first task was to remove the body of the fallen Tory, and when this had been done the three found their way to the room where the logs on the hearth were still burning.

"Haber, lad," suggested Timothy, "did th' ould Tory have a bit t' ate lift in his house?"

"Yes, Tim. There's something in the other room. But do you think we'd better try to cook anything now?"

"An' why not? 'T is nobody knows th' traitor is dead, an' if his frinds happen t' come they'll be afther thinkin' he's to home here, an' th' smell o' bacon will make 'em all th' more

frindly, bedad. An' it's his frinds we're wantin' as much as his bacon. Yis, me darlint, 't is th' very thing t' be afther doin'. 'T will sarve t' draw 'em on, an' me frind Joe here 'll kape watch. Joe can't do much wid his tongue, but ach, lad, do yez moind th' oye o' him?"

When a hasty search by Timothy revealed a side of bacon and some cornmeal and potatoes in the other room, the Irishman's determination was not to be withstood. Joe naturally offered no protest, and the sight of the food in a measure deprived Heber of the resistance which his judgment convinced him it was better to make.

"We 'll soon have a male fit for th' king."

"I thought you did n't believe in King George, Tim," suggested Heber.

"No more do Oi!" retorted Timothy glibly.

"'T is not for th' loikes o' him Oi'd be after cookin' th' bacon an' potatoes."

"Who then?"

"'T is th' kings o' ould Oireland, me bye."

"But Ireland has n't any king except King George."

"An' he's no king at all, at all. 'T is th' kings uv *ould* Oireland Oi'm after cookin' for. Faith, lad, an' haven't Oi been tellin' yez that

wan toime th' Murphys were th' kings uv Oireland? An' is n't me own name Murphy? Till me that, I dunno."

"Yes, your name is certainly Murphy, Tim," admitted Heber.

"An' it's for Murphy, wan o' th' kings o' th' ould sod, what I do be afther cookin' for now. 'Tis n't iv'ry day yez have the honor, Haber, me darlint, t' be invoited t' dine wid a king."

Despite Timothy's loquaciousness, he had not for a moment ceased his labors, and soon, true to his word, he had prepared a meal which Heber was convinced would have satisfied even the demands of royalty, provided the appetite of the royal guest had been quickened as was his own.

"Now, thin," declared Timothy when his task at last was completed, "me throne, what Oi've lift at home, isn't jist convanient for me t' sit down on, so by yer lave we'll all stand up an' help oursilves. 'T will be more loike, Oi'm thinkin', an' besoides we can grab our guns a bit better if th' inimy appears."

Both of his suggestions were unanimously adopted, or at least no opposition was shown, and the three hungry men were soon busied in the congenial task of disposing of Timothy's tempting viands. At the same time a careful

watch was maintained, and all three were prepared for quick action should occasion demand it. The meal was completed without any disturbance, however, and when the afternoon had slowly passed and still no one had approached the house, Heber began to fear that his suggestion that the three men should remain in the place was not to prove itself a wise one. Even Timothy had become silent, and seated on the floor, as he was, with his rifle across his knees and his back resting against the wall, his head nodded frequently and his eyes closed.

"Tim," whispered Joe suddenly.

In an instant Timothy was wide awake, startled by the unusual fact that his comrade was speaking.

"What is it, me lad?" demanded the Irishman in his penetrating whisper.

In response Joe Elerson merely pointed to the window on the side of the room where he himself was standing, and Timothy instantly darted to the spot and peered eagerly out.

"It's sivin o' th' ridskins, that's what it is," whispered Timothy as he turned to Heber. "Th' whole sivin is comin' t' inspict us. 'T is meself what knew th' cookin' o' the Murphys would draw 'em into the trap."

"We may be the ones that have been trapped," suggested Heber, as he instantly followed Timothy's example and looked to the priming of his rifle.

"'T is four o' th' haythen we can drop at the firrst shot," said Timothy eagerly, "and thin it'll be man to man wid what's lift. Shall we do it, Joe? What do yez say, Haber?"

"No," responded Joe Elerson promptly.

"What thin? 'T is th' wise lad yez be, Joe, whin yez do be after once spakin'."

"Let them come. Let two come inside. You talk, Tim. You do that best. Heber an' I'll cover two wid our guns an' you'll close th' door in the face of the others. They won't try to harm us when two of their own fellows are inside."

"They'll go away and get more men and come back and have us every one," suggested Heber, who was strongly in favor of Timothy's plan.

"We can fire at five as well as seven," said Joe Elerson quietly. "We'll have two men inside the house, and we may be able to find out some things."

"Roight yez arre, Joe Elerson," said Timothy quickly. "Ach, the hid yez have! Can yez talk th' lingo, Haber?"

"I can understand a few words, but I can't talk it."

"We'll be afther makin' the spalpeens talk Oirish," said Timothy, "an' thin we'll all know what they say. Hist! Here they come now."

The approaching band had advanced to the door, and the confidence with which they demanded entrance at once disclosed their ignorance of the fate which had befallen the owner. A few whispered directions were given by Timothy, as Heber and Joe Elerson placed themselves, their rifles tightly clasped in their hands, one on either side of the door, and then Timothy himself partly opened the door to admit the first of the visitors.

Without a word the first two passed into the room, and then the Irishman suddenly pushed to the door, dropped the heavy oak bar into its place, and turned quickly upon the two Indians within the room. At the same time Heber and Joe Elerson had raised their rifles and covered the astonished warriors, who, aware of their helplessness, offered no resistance.

"That's roight, lads," exclaimed Timothy as a shout of astonishment or anger rose from the five left outside. "'Tis a croupy yell yez have," he added as he peered keenly for an

instant at the two Indians in the room. "Hould out yer hands," he demanded sharply.

There was no escape from the demand, and speedily Timothy secured both prisoners, placing their guns where he could easily use them. As soon as this task had been accomplished the Irishman stepped to the window or porthole and fired both barrels of his rifle at the assembly outside before, with a wild yell, he stepped back into a place of safety.

A moment later his delight found forcible expression when he perceived that the five men had all fled from the spot. Turning then to Heber, Timothy said, "Did yez iver see me make a white man out o' a ridskin? Watch me now an' yez 'll see th' soight uv yer loife."

Puzzled by his friend's words, Heber stared at him in astonishment as Timothy began at once to scrub vigorously the face of one of the prisoners. Wonder of wonders, too, the appearance of the man's face certainly was speedily changing. The streaks of red and yellow disappeared, the tawny color gave place to a lighter hue, and in a brief time Heber, too astonished to speak, beheld the red warrior transformed into George Cuck.

CHAPTER XV

IN FORT SCHUYLER

"ACH, th' beauty!" exclaimed Timothy delightedly as he stepped back and gazed in pretended admiration at the transformed prisoner. "An' now I dunno," said the Irishman glibly, "but th' other haythen would look betther for a bit uv' a scrub. S'pose yez be th' one t' try it, Haber, lad."

"No use," said Heber slowly, for he had not as yet entirely recovered from his astonishment at the appearance of the Tory, who most of all was detested by him. "That's Hide Sam, and he can't change his color any more than a leopard can change his spots."

"Hide Sam!" exclaimed Timothy. "What? Is he th' ridskin what tried to do for Gin'ral Phil Schuyler?"

"That's what he is, Tim."

"Th' saints be praised! Here we have th' Toory what needs a rope an' th' ridskin what needs a bit o' could lead, I dunno. 'Tis foiné wurrk, lad, an' niver a bit o' trouble at all, at all."

The face of George Cuck was a study as the Irishman spoke. Never before had it seemed so disgusting to Heber. The scars of small pox, the expression of mingled rage and fear, the coarse features, all combined to make the man repellant, and a feeling of bitterness not only against his former neighbor but against Susan Randall as well, surged up in the young soldier's heart as he gazed at the prisoner and thought of the letter which he had found and placed in his own pocket.

"You talk mighty fine about your 'hangings,'" said George Cuck, speaking for the first time since his capture. "You rebels will have to pay for hanging Jake Helmer. And if you try to do for me—"

"What? What's that?" demanded Timothy. "Is Jake—"

"Yes, sir. He was hanged at Johnstown yesterday afternoon. Poor chap! And he never harmed any one in his life either."

"Well thin, niver yez moind poor Jake. 'Tis a bit quick th' min were wid their rope, Oi'm thinkin' mesilf. Now if it had been yersilf what was to have a taste o' th' rope there's nobody would be afther findin' a bit o' fault. You and yer frind here, Hide Sam, desarve all that's comin' t' yez. Haber,"



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Timothy added, "would yez moind jist spakin' t' our men an' biddin' 'em t' come in an' help us a bit."

Heber at once flung open the door, and first peering about to assure himself that none of George Cuck's companions were lurking near, ran swiftly to the place where Captain Long and his men had been left, and at once delivered the Irishman's message. Nor was there any delay, as the entire force at once advanced to the house where Timothy and his companion were holding their two prisoners.

Upon the arrival of Captain Long, he at once assumed control, and as soon as he had heard Timothy's story of what had occurred he turned angrily to George Cuck and said: "What did you disguise yourself for?"

"I did n't disguise myself," replied George Cuck sullenly.

"No. Probably you were showing yourself in your true colors," said the captain bitterly; "only I'd rather trust myself to a red Indian than to a white one. You of course know what it means for you to be caught as you were?"

"No, sir, I don't know. I was n't doing anything different from what the most of our men are doing. I'm not ashamed to say that after I had got into the camp at—" The

Tory stopped for a moment in confusion as he realized that he had almost mentioned the name of the place where Butler's Greens were to assemble. "I should have had my regular uniform," George Cuck added, after a brief silence during which the men all watched him without speaking. "This was my uniform. I'm not the only one that has it, either."

"Oh, I know that. I know all about that," said the captain quickly. "You'll have what you deserve and all you deserve, if I have my way about it. Now will you answer my questions?"

"I'll do my best," said the captive. Heber was positive he had detected a gleam of hope in the prisoner's eyes, but it was gone in a moment.

"Now then, how many men has Butler?" demanded Captain Long.

"I can't tell you. I know he is expecting fifteen hundred when we all get together," replied the prisoner.

The captain smiled incredulously as he said, "Where do they assemble?"

"In two or three places first, and then, when the word is received they expect to get together in another place."

"Where is that?"

"I can't tell you, for I don't know. It will depend upon what you do, and where there is the greatest need — or the best chance to do something."

"When is all this to be done?"

"Just as soon as possible. Part of it is done already."

"And you were on your way to join Butler?"

"Yes, sir. I was." Heber had never before seen the man when he apparently was so outspoken. It was difficult to believe now that he was speaking the truth, and yet the young soldier was aware that the Tory's words simply confirmed the rumors that had been current throughout the Mohawk Valley.

"Tell me about Brant," demanded Captain Long.

"Tell you what about him?"

"Where is he?"

"I don't know."

"When did you last hear of him? Have you seen him?"

"You know as much about where he is and what he is doing as I do," said the Tory sullenly.

"I know he's been sending some of his men into our settlements —"

"What did you expect him to do?" broke in the prisoner boldly.

"How many of the warriors does he expect to have?"

"Every one. You know that already."

"Oneidas?"

"Yes, he expects to have the Oneidas, too. They're not much more than a parcel of squaws anyway, and just as soon as the work begins they'll know enough to understand what's best for them."

"Tim, we can't stay here any longer," suggested the captain, turning to the Irishman as he spoke.

"No more we can't, sorr," replied Timothy. "If yer honor 'd jist spake th' wurrd we'd lave this mon and his brother—for Oi'm thinkin' Hide Sam is only a bit whiter nor the traitor himsilf—we'd jist lave 'em both hangin' outside th' door as a sort o' warnin' t' th' haythen, th' same as a scarecrow is t' th' black thaves in a field o' corn. Did yez spake th' wurrd, captain darlint?"

Before he replied, Captain Long looked keenly at George Cuck and smiled as he perceived the momentary terror expressed on the face of the Tory. "No, Tim, I'll leave that for others to do. I don't doubt that both these

fellows will get all they deserve, but I'll leave it for others to say what that shall be. The thing for us to do is to leave both these men for you and Joe Elerson to take back to Johnstown. You can give them up to the authorities there, and they can do for them what they did for Jake Helmer, or they can send them on to Albany. All the rest of us can keep straight on our way to Fort Stanwix, and it will take us four or five days yet to get through."

"Ach, captain," said Timothy hastily, "they be missin' me at th' fort. It's me own wurrd Oi gave that me an' me frind Joe would be there afore this."

"They'll have to get along without you, Tim," said the captain quietly. "I'm sorry, but there's no other way out of it. You can come back just as soon as you have put these two men where they belong—"

"But why not put them there now, captain?" protested Timothy. "We, iv'ry one o' us, knows jist where it is they belong, as yez say, an' what's th' use o' goin' t' all th' pother o' takin' 'em back t' Johnstown, I dunno? Jist string 'em up here, or if yez say th' wurrd Oi'll jist put 'em out by th' stoomp an' use me two barrels—"

"No, Tim. You and Joe Elerson will have

to take them to Johnstown," said Captain Long quietly.

"How about Haber?" inquired Timothy quickly as he perceived that further protesting would be useless. "Is th' lad t' go back wid me an' Joe?"

Captain Long hesitated a moment and then said, "No, Tim. Heber Otis will go with us. We'll need every man we can get, and I hope you and Joe will not be long delayed. We'll need both your rifles, Tim."

"T' be shore yez will," replied the good-natured Irishman. "An' that's th' very reason why I'm suggestin' that we attind to these two haythen here widout any more pother. 'T won't take a minute, captain, t' do th' trick," pleaded Timothy.

Even Hide Sam was aware of the hesitation of Captain Long, and George Cuck's face became pale as he intently watched the leader.

"No, Tim. You and Joe take these men to Johnstown. ' The rest of us will go on, and perhaps you 'll overtake us before we get half way through the Mohawk Valley. Don't let the fellows get away from you."

"An' if they try it, captain," inquired Timothy, grinning, "shall we jist say good-by t' thim or shall we —"

"You'll know what to do, Tim, and they'll know what to expect if they try any such trick on you."

"Faith ! an' Oi wish they'd be afther tryin it now before we start," said Timothy lightly as he glanced suggestively at George Cuck.

But neither the Tory nor his companion responded, and in a brief time the two Irishmen had departed with their prisoners, and Heber Otis, together with all the other men, had resumed the long journey toward Fort Stanwix.

A week had elapsed before the little band, reënforced by the addition of a dozen men at Albany, at last arrived at Fort Stanwix. The advance had been made more difficult by storms and the melting of the snow, so that every man was glad of the relief that came with the entrance into the fort. A rest was at once granted the newcomers ; but on the second day after his arrival Heber, who had previously been informed that one of his former neighbors at Cherry Valley — Colonel Campbell — was now with the men at Fort Stanwix, sought out the officer. He found him at last in his quarters, and as Heber entered the room he stopped in astonishment at the appearance the colonel presented. He was seated before his desk or rude table, and did

not look up as Heber entered the room. But was it possible, Heber thought, that this could be the same man he had known at Cherry Valley? Only a year ago and Colonel Campbell had been one of the strongest and most warm-hearted men in the entire region.

In the prime of middle life the man's cheery ways and great physical strength, his willingness to aid every one that called upon him, — and the demands, as Heber was aware, had not been few, — had made him the best-loved man in the settlement. But the man whom Heber now beheld seated at the desk was gray-headed, his back was bent, and as the colonel slowly turned his face to perceive who his visitor was Heber could see that deep furrows were in his forehead and the expression in his eyes was almost hopeless. Never had Heber seen such a speedy change in any one before, and his eyes filled as he advanced, so confident was he that he understood the cause.

"Heber, I am glad to see you," said Colonel Campbell, extending his hand.

"You are not well, colonel," exclaimed Heber quickly as he grasped the outstretched hand.

"I am able to do the work of two men,"

replied the colonel quietly. "That does not look as if I was ailing, does it?"

"No, not exactly," stammered Heber. "But —"

"How are your people?" inquired the colonel hastily.

"Well; at least they were when I left them."

"Are they in Schenectady still?"

"Yes, sir. Colonel, do you hear anything more of Mrs. Campbell and the children?" The moment the question was out Heber regretted asking it, for an expression of despair swept over the man's face. For a brief time he did not speak, and the young soldier was ill at ease in his presence.

"No, nothing to speak of, Heber," said the colonel at last. "You know what happened to my mother?"

"Yes, sir," replied Heber in a low voice. The report that the body of the aged woman had been found in the path along which the Senecas had departed after the massacre at Cherry Valley was known to all the people that had dwelt there;¹ but not a word had been heard concerning the fate of the colonel's wife and her four children, who had been carried away captives at the same time.

¹ See *The Red Chief*.

“I can only hope that they were sent on to Niagara,” said the colonel. “If they were, they may be safe, but I have heard only the rumor which a young Oneida runner, Hungry Wolf, brought here. He said there was a report among the Onondagas that my wife and children were now in one of the Seneca villages, the children having been scattered and adopted into different families, and my wife was adopted by Little Aaron.”

CHAPTER XVI

AN ADVANCE

WHEN Heber departed from the quarters of Colonel Campbell his heart was heavy with the story to which he had listened. He had known the Campbells well, and the thought of the captivity of the four children and their mother, to say nothing of the fate of the aged woman, who doubtless had been slain by the departing warriors when her inability to keep up with them on the march became evident, increased the young soldier's feeling of depression. His own family might suffer a similar fate before the approaching summer was ended, for no one knew what was in store for the scattered people of the region.

When several days had elapsed and Timothy Murphy and Joe Elerson failed to appear, Heber's anxiety increased. There were many Tories in the upper Mohawk Valley, and Tim was inclined to talk with any one he might chance to meet. These were facts that could not be ignored. The young soldier's affection for the garrulous Irishman was so strong that

the fate of George Cuck seemed a small matter in comparison with the safety of the rifle-man.

There was slight opportunity, however, afforded Heber for giving way to his anxiety, for there were many duties to be done in Fort Schuyler, and the men were busy from early morning until late at night. Newcomers were continually arriving, but what project was to be entered upon by the leaders no man knew, and even the officers appeared to be as ignorant as the men themselves. That something of importance was to be attempted every one was convinced, however, and Miles Sprague, whose friendship Heber had come to esteem more highly with the passing of the days, despite that young man's air of superiority, provided the one break in the monotony of the routine of life in the fort.

Reports were brought that the threatened invasion of the Mohawk Valley by Brant and his warriors and Butler's Greens had not as yet materialized, for reasons that were evident to the assembled soldiers. But there was no cessation of the labors in the old fort, and as the spring days came the conviction that some enterprise of importance was being planned became more evident.

By the middle of April the snow had disappeared, and the mild days had caused the region to assume more than the promise of summer. Birds were singing in the forest, the buds of the trees had begun to swell, and it was manifest that winter was gone.

Still Timothy Murphy and his friend had not come, nor had any word been received from them. Whether they were prisoners or not, or had suffered some other misfortune, was an unsolved mystery. Heber still retained the missive signed "S. R." which he had found in the house of the fallen Tory, Service, and though his anger at Susan Randall became keener with each perusal, it in no way added to his knowledge of the fate of George Cuck.

It was known in the fort that frequent messages had been received from the nearby Oneida tribe, and also that runners from the Tuscaroras were occasionally admitted; but the men for the greater part were still in ignorance as to the movements and plans of the Five Nations. The impatience of the young soldier naturally increased under such circumstances; and when April had well advanced and Timothy still did not return, and the prospect of an immediate action by the sol-

diers did not become brighter, Heber began to think seriously of seeking permission to return to his family in Schenectady.

At last, however, there came a sudden and welcome change. It was reported among the men that Colonel Van Schaick had received orders to move upon the red men. Just where or what the attempt was to be, Miles, who was Heber's informant, was unable to state. He was confident, however, that the colonel had received orders, and that he was told the soldiers were not to be accompanied by any of their Indian allies, for fear of increasing the friction, which already, as we know, was intense. The men were to be as merciful as possible, also, and though they were to destroy all arms, and even to burn stores and villages if need be, life was not to be taken wantonly. The treacherous Indians were to be taught a severe lesson, but it was to be, if possible, more by frightening them than by destruction.

"How did you find all this out, Miles?" demanded Heber.

"Oh, I know what's going on," replied Miles lightly. "I fancy you have noticed how many new men have been coming of late?"

"Yes."

"And perhaps you noticed, too, that there

have been more bateaux brought up the Mohawk than were necessary just to bring the men that came?"

"I had n't thought of that, but it's so."

"Of course it is so," laughed Miles lightly. "Every soldier understands just what it means. You'll know, too, when you've had a little more experience."

"What does it mean?"

"Why, that the boats are to be used."

"Yes, I take it we'll need them if we cross Oneida Lake. We might march around it, but it would be easier to go down Wood Creek and cross the lake that way."

"You're wise, Heber. I have hopes of you, yet."

"But how did you hear about what it is proposed to do?"

"I was told."

"Who told you?"

"That I can't tell you. There are some things which we must not—" Heber laughed quietly at the unconscious air of importance his friend assumed, and the slight flush that appeared in Miles's cheeks betrayed the annoyance of that young soldier, whose importance in his own eyes was not to be lightly dealt with by others.

"We're going to march against the Onondagas," said Miles abruptly.

"We are? How do you know?"

"I know it, and that's enough."

"When do we go?"

"Soon. Within a week. Perhaps to-morrow or next day."

"Are we to do anything to the Oneidas?"

"No, why should we? They have been our good friends. Brant has been sending letters and runners to them all winter urging them to join him and threatening them all sorts of things if they did n't do as he said. But they have stood by us, and we shan't harm them."

"How do you know they are any more friendly than the Onondagas?"

"Because the Onondagas are treacherous. I don't mind telling you that the Oneida chiefs have told us what their neighbors are doing. They have pretended to be friendly with us, and then all the time they have been working with Brant and are almost ready to go in with him."

"You know a lot, don't you, Miles?" said Heber lightly.

"I know what I've been told. I don't like the Onondagas. We'll have a chance now to make them see that they have made a mistake."

It was not long before Heber learned that his friend had indeed been correctly informed, and that an expedition against the Onondagas was to be begun and at once. In the evening of April eighteenth came the order for every man in the fort to assist in carrying the bateaux across the carrying-place to Wood Creek. Convinced as every soldier was that the task was preliminary to the much-talked-of invasion of the Onondaga country, they all worked with a will, and the boats and stores were all safely transported long before the hour of midnight came.

Early on the following morning five hundred and fifty-eight men and officers marched from Fort Stanwix to Wood Creek and embarked on the waiting bateaux. It was by chance that Heber found himself in the same boat with Miles, and the smile on the face of the latter was so indicative of his pride and importance, that the young soldier, despite the uncertainty of the results of the expedition, smiled in response as he greeted his friend.

Fallen trees impeded the progress of the bateaux to such an extent that the men were compelled frequently to land and travel along the banks of the swollen stream. The ground

itself was still soft, and the progress of the force consequently was slow and difficult. A heavy mist rested over the land, and if any lurking spies of the Onondagas had been near they would not easily have discovered the advance of the force.

It was late when the boats at last reached the waters of the Oneida Lake, and here the difficulties were increased by the presence of strong head winds that blew steadily all through the night. But the determination of the men was not likely to be thwarted now, and by the middle of the following afternoon the entire band had arrived in safety at Fort Brewington (Brewerton).

Here a guard was left to protect the flotilla, and the little army at once pushed forward. The forest was dense and tangled with vines and brush, the ground resembled a swamp, so soft and sponge-like was it; but for nine miles the men resolutely followed their leaders until a halt was called.

No one knew how many dark eyes might be peering upon the band from the adjacent forest, though not an Indian had been seen since the departure from Fort Schuyler. Nevertheless the men were forbidden to kindle any fires, and the troops slept that night under arms.

Heber was so completely wearied by the difficulties he had encountered on the march that as soon as he stretched himself upon the damp ground he was asleep. Miles Sprague, who slept beside his friend, for a time endeavored to explain to his companion a change that was to be made in the plans on the following day, but the sounds which Heber emitted in his sleep were not encouraging, and soon even Miles was sleeping.

As soon as the men had eaten their breakfast on the following morning Miles eagerly said to Heber, "We're to change our places. We're to go with Captain Graham in the advance guard."

"Why?" demanded Heber.

"Because it's better. I had a little difficulty in arranging it, but it's all right now. The colonel is very anxious to keep the Onondagas from finding out that we are so near, and if we can capture a few of their men it will be a great help to us."

"And is that why *we* are to be in the advance guard?" inquired Heber with a laugh.

"Yes, surely," responded Miles soberly.

"I'm agreed. When do we start?"

"Right away."

The orders to proceed were soon given, but

before the main body moved, Heber reported with Miles to Captain Graham, who was in command of the advance guard, and scouting parties, including the two young soldiers, were at once assigned to a position together, somewhat to the right of the line which the troops were to follow and well in advance of them.

The two boys, left somewhat now to their own resources, although they were not far from other scattered bodies that were cautiously moving in advance of the troops, soon arrived at an arm of Onondaga Lake which they knew they must cross. Onondaga Castle was not more than two or three miles away, and soon, if no misfortune overtook the army, it would be close to the line of villages in which the tribes dwelt.

"It would be great," suggested Miles in a low voice, "if we could only get into the castle before the others came and put out the council fire."

"So it would," replied Heber, "but how to get across this water is the biggest problem before us just now."

"That council fire has been burning for no man knows how many years," continued Miles, ignoring his friend's remark. "Perhaps you don't know it, but the Onondagas used

to be one of the strongest of the Five Nations, and because they lived here right in the middle of the country of the Iroquois, this fire was given them to keep, and they were never to let it go out."

"It has been put out, though," suggested Heber.

"Yes, but only twice. Frontenac put it out in 1692 when he had to show the Onondagas that he was n't afraid of them, and marched his Frenchmen right into the village. Then it was put out two years ago this spring."

"Yes. I know about that. But, Miles, we must wade or swim across this creek, or is it a part of the lake? We must n't stop here."

"If we do that, and any of the sneaking Onondagas are watching us, as very likely they are, we'll be a good mark out there."

"We can't help that," retorted Heber. "We've just got to do what we were told. So here goes."

As he spoke Heber began to move toward the water, holding his rifle high above his head as he did so, evidently intending to wade into the stream. He had advanced but a few steps, however, when he suddenly stepped back and uttered a low exclamation as a young Indian, who had been stretched

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out behind a log directly in the path of the young soldier's advance, abruptly sprang to his feet, and uttering a fierce cry sprang swiftly to the shelter of the great trees that were growing even down to the shore of the lake.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COUNCIL FIRE OF THE ONONDAGAS

UNMINDFUL of any peril that might threaten from the presence of other concealed Indians, Heber darted swiftly in pursuit, calling sharply to Miles as he did so, and in a moment both young soldiers were running in the direction in which the fugitive had disappeared. A brief glimpse of the Indian was obtained, and it was seen that the warrior was unarmed and was running no more swiftly than were his two pursuers. Heber, who was remarkably fleet, soon perceived that he was gaining slightly, and in his eagerness he increased his efforts. Leaping over the logs, dodging the trees and roots in his pathway, he did not once glance behind him to see whether or not Miles was close at hand, and not many minutes had elapsed before the young Indian — for he was not much more than a boy — came to the border of a little point in the land from which there was no escape except by plunging into the shallow water and wading across to the opposite shore.

Without hesitating a moment the Indian leaped into the water and began to wade the stream. The water did not come above his waist, and, splashing as he struggled forward, Heber could perceive that the red man was making rapid progress. For an instant Heber was tempted to raise his rifle and fire, but at the thought of the possible alarm which the discharge of his weapon might give to any lurking Onondagas he quickly abandoned the suggestion, again called sharply to Miles, and lifting his rifle above his head boldly leaped into the stream in his eagerness to overtake the warrior.

Again redoubling his efforts Heber soon became aware that he was rapidly gaining, and when he had approached within a half-dozen yards of the man he was following, he called sharply to him —

“Here, stop! I’ll not harm you if you stop! If you keep on, I’ll fire!”

To his surprise the young Indian abruptly stopped, and turning about gazed stoically at his pursuer. His eyes were gleaming, as Heber could easily perceive, but he uttered no word, and, apparently resigned to his fate, awaited the young soldier’s approach.

With a leap Heber reached forward, and

grasping the arm of the motionless young Onondaga he pointed back to the shore from which both had fled and said, "Go back there! Go ahead of me. Don't try to get away and I'll not fire upon you."

Heber had no means of knowing whether or not his words were understood, but the Onondaga plainly comprehended what was required of him. Without a protest he at once turned and slowly began to wade back to the shore while Heber followed closely, keeping all the time a careful watch upon the actions of his prisoner. When Heber and his captive regained the shore, Miles at once joined them, taking upon himself the control of the prisoner and giving all directions as they proceeded on their way back to the main body.

There the Onondaga was at once delivered into the hands of the leader, whose words of praise Miles appropriated to himself.

"You have done well, young man," said the colonel quietly. "I shall not forget to report your success when we return to Fort Schuyler."

"I thank you, colonel," replied Miles, bowing low as he spoke. "This is not the only success I trust I may have on this expedition."

The colonel was too busy to note the some-

what pompous manner of the young soldier or the quiet smile that appeared on Heber's face, and at once withdrew with the young Onondaga to consult with some of his men. As Heber and Miles turned away the latter said, "I rather think this has been a good day's work for us."

"For you, perhaps," suggested Heber dryly.

"Oh, I'll not forget you," responded Miles quickly. "Don't you be afraid of that. I'll look after you."

"That's good of you," said Heber quietly.

There was no opportunity afforded for an extended conversation, however, for in a brief time the word to advance was given, and the entire force moved forward. It was known that the Onondaga villages now were only two or three miles distant, and the fact that the only Indian that had been seen was the one which Heber had captured was somewhat disquieting. How many dark eyes had been peering at the advancing men or what messages the swift runners of the Onondagas had borne to their tribe of the coming of the army of the white men, there were no means of knowing. The greatest fear in the hearts of the soldiers was that some ambuscade might have been made by their foes like that which Brant had formed

in the terrible battle at Oriskany. A careful outlook was maintained, flanking and scouting parties were used, and every precaution taken to avoid any trap of the wily Onondagas.

It was not long before the advancing force arrived on the shore of the arm of the lake where Heber and Miles previously had been. Across this the men waded, holding their rifles high above their heads, and, though in places the water came to their shoulders, the passage was safely made.

The force was then divided, Captain Graham and his followers, among whom were Heber and Miles, being ordered to advance cautiously and swiftly to the lower castle, and the remaining force was divided into parties which were to proceed to the other villages of the nation, the general plan being to surround and destroy as many of these places as possible before the Indians should have learned of the approach of their foes.

It was not long before Captain Graham's men came near to the borders of the principal village, where the council fire of the Five Nations was burning.

For years, perhaps in part owing to the fact that the Onondagas had at one time been the bravest and fiercest of the nations

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in the confederacy, and in part due to the fact that they dwelt in a region which was the most central part of the country inhabited by the allied red men, the keeping alive of this great fire had been intrusted to the Onondagas themselves.

When the little hamlet had been surrounded by Captain Graham's men, there was a moment of tense silence before the word was given to advance. Heber, like his companions, was concealed behind a great tree, and like the other men was excitedly peering out at the little village. Birds were singing in the nearby thickets, a few silver-tinted clouds could be seen in the bright blue of the heavens, the smoke from the great council fire was slowly rising on the soft April air, but for some reason scarcely a soul was in sight in the village itself. A few children and women were there, but they were as silent as the trees of the surrounding forest.

Suddenly the word was given to advance, and after one shout, intense rather than loud, the men all darted from their hiding-places and rushed upon the apparently unsuspecting village or "castle." At the approach of the white soldiers there was a slight commotion, but still only a few of the warriors could be

seen. These barely turned and fired upon the approaching men, and in response came the reports of some of the soldiers' rifles, and several of the Onondagas were seen to fall. Still there was nothing like an organized or even determined resistance, and in a brief time the excited soldiers had made prisoners of the few Indians that were discovered in the village.

By the captain's orders the flames of the council fire were quickly extinguished and the smoking embers scattered in every direction. Some of the men were then ordered to search the huts, while others collected the beans and the corn that had been stored in the place. Still others were rushing eagerly about, securing the horses and cattle that the Indians owned. Such was the haste of the men that within a half-hour the task had been completed, and still there were no signs to be seen that the Onondagas were to offer any resistance.

At the command of Captain Graham a huge bonfire was made of the corn and beans, the cattle and horses were slain, and even the wigwams were set on fire, while the muskets that had been found were all placed together and prepared for use by the soldiers them-

selves. In a few minutes the village was a mass of flames. A huge volume of smoke was rising from the ruins, and the famous "castle" of the Onondagas had been destroyed.

There was no delay granted the men, however, for as soon as the ruin was complete Captain Graham ordered his followers to move upon the other villages, which extended, as has been previously stated, at intervals throughout ten miles of the Onondaga Valley. In these places their own comrades were discovered by Captain Graham's men, and all were busied in a task similar to that in which they themselves had recently engaged. Corn, beans, huts, horses, cattle, everything was destroyed indiscriminately, the only exception being the muskets which were found in every village.

It was evident that somehow the Onondagas had learned of the approach of their foes, and so precipitate had been their flight that even many of their weapons had been abandoned. The great swivel gun — the gift of the redcoats — which Captain Graham had found near the council fire, had also been made useless, and the once powerful Onondagas, it was believed, had now been made powerless until they

should again be assisted by the friends of Brant.

It was not long before the destruction was complete. Not a man in the force of white men had even been wounded, while twelve of the Onondagas who had not fled had fallen before the fire of the white men, and thirty-three prisoners had been secured.

The return to Fort Schuyler was speedily begun, for the purpose for which the expedition had been made was accomplished. The "eternal" council fire had been extinguished, and it was confidently believed that the superstitious savages would be terrified by that fact alone. In addition, their homes had been destroyed, their supplies burned, and if the Onondagas had planned to join the forces of Brant in the coming summer it was now believed that all such projects would be abandoned in the necessity that was upon the warriors of providing for the immediate wants of the nation.

During the return march to the place where the bateaux had been left with the guard, Heber's heart at times was heavy. Bitterly as he feared and hated the red men, and cruel as had been many of their inhuman deeds, still the seemingly wanton destruction of property and

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life in the abodes of the Onondagas appeared almost as evil as the treachery and cruelty of the red men themselves. However, the knowledge that few of his companions shared in any such feeling caused the young soldier to be silent, and he even attempted to justify the part he had taken by recalling the massacre at Cherry Valley. The reprisal had been necessary, he assured himself again and again, and was the only method which would teach the treacherous tribe that its share in the struggle which at the time was going on between the colonies and Great Britain must cease.

Several times during the return march the men were fired upon from the forest, and repeatedly parties were sent in pursuit of the few Onondagas who in the spirit of revenge or hatred had followed the retiring army. A few more of the red men were secured as prisoners, but when the army at last arrived at Fort Schuyler after the march of one hundred and eighty miles (going and returning) had been completed, it was still true that not one of Colonel Van Schaick's men had been hurt.

Heber's first task after his return was to make inquiry concerning his friend Timothy Murphy; but nothing had been heard of the Irishman or his companion, and the mystery

was still unsolved. The report of the hanging of the Tory Jake, however, was confirmed, and it was declared that he had suffered at the hands of the angry patriots at Johnstown even as George Cuck had related.

Two days after the return of the soldiers from the expedition against the Onondagas a delegation of Oneidas stalked solemnly into the fort. The coming of these warriors, led by the huge chief Skenandoah, who was accompanied by his orator, Good Peter, instantly aroused the fears of the leaders. Ostensibly the Oneidas were good friends of the Americans, but they were friendly also with the Onondagas. The arrival of the Oneida leaders so soon after the punishment of their neighbors at once increased the alarm in the garrison, and when Good Peter began to speak before the assembly there were many expressions of anxiety to be seen on the faces of the listening soldiers.

After he had been formally introduced Good Peter at once began to speak :

“Brothers: You see before you some of your friends, the Oneidas; they come to see you.

“The engagements that have been entered into between us and our brothers, the Americans, are well known to you.

"We were much surprised, a few days ago, by the news which a warrior brought to our castle with a war-shout, informing us that our friends, the Onondagas, were destroyed.

"We were desirous to see you on this occasion, as they think you might have been mistaken in destroying that part of the tribe.

"We suppose you cannot answer us upon this subject, as the matter was agreed upon. But perhaps you may know something of this matter.

"When we heard of this account, we sent back word to our friends remaining among them, telling them not to be pale-hearted because some of them were destroyed, but to keep up with their former engagements.

"We sent off some of our people to Canasaraga to invite them to come to our village; but they returned an answer that they had sent some of their own runners to Onondaga and they waited for their return.

"Our people brought for answer that they were much obliged to their children, the Oneidas, for attending to them in their distresses, and they would be glad if they would speak smoothly to their brethren, the Americans, to know whether all this was done by design or by mistake.

"If it was a mistake, say they, we hope

to see our brethren, the prisoners ; if by design, we will still keep our engagement with you and not join the king's party. But if our brethren, the Americans, mean to destroy us also, we will not fly — we will wait here and receive our death.

“ Brothers : this was the answer of the Onondagas. As for us, the Oneidas and Tuscaroras, you know our sentiments. We have supposed we knew yours.

“ The commissioners promised us that when they found anything wrong they would tell us and make it right.

“ Brothers : if we have done anything wrong we shall now be glad if you would tell us so.”

At the conclusion of each statement all the assembled sachems uttered their approval of what had been said by their spokesman. The anxiety of the leaders and soldiers had not been relieved by what Good Peter had said, and when the orator solemnly resumed his seat, at the conclusion of his address, the eyes of all the white men present were turned toward Colonel Van Schaick as he arose to reply.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE REPORT OF A DOUBLE-RIFLE

AWARE, as the colonel was, of the fact that doubtless the Onondagas themselves had inspired the Oneidas to come with their shrewd queries, and that even the continued friendship of the Oneida nation would depend upon his own response, his words were carefully chosen, and the manner which Good Peter had used was also employed by him. After a brief and trying silence, Colonel Van Schaick slowly arose and for a moment looked sternly at Skenandoah and his orator.

Then, speaking impressively, the colonel began,—

“I am glad to see my friends, the Oneidas and Tuscaroras. I perfectly remember the engagements the Five Nations entered into four years ago, and that they promised to preserve a strict and honorable neutrality during the present war, which was all we asked them to do for us.

“But I likewise know that all of them, except our brethren the Oneidas and Tuscaroras,

broke their engagements and flung away the chain of friendship. But the Onondagas have been great murderers; we have found the scalps of our brothers at their Castle.

"They were cut off not by mistake but by design — I was ordered to do it — and it is done.

"As for the other matters of which you speak, I recommend a deputation to the commissioners at Albany. I am not appointed to treat with you on these subjects.

"I am a warrior. My duty is to obey the orders which they send me."

No further speeches were made at the assembly, and when the Oneidas departed for their homes Colonel Van Schaick was convinced that the friendly relations of the nation with the Americans had been strengthened rather than weakened by the conference. In spite of the fact that the Onondagas were neighbors of the Oneidas and that the peoples had intermarried, the hostility of the Oneidas to Butler and his Tory followers was so keen that more would be required to break the friendly relations with the Americans than the punishment of the Onondagas for their treachery, which was well known by their neighbors.

It was not long after the return of the men to Fort Schuyler before the entire garrison was aroused by the report that three hundred or more of the Onondaga warriors, angered by the extinction of their sacred council fire and the destruction of their homes, were upon the war path, and at the same time word was received that the Mohawks and Senecas were falling upon the scattered settlers in the lower part of the Mohawk Valley. Evidently some concerted attempt was being made to drive the white people all back into Schenectady or Albany, and the anxiety of many of the militia in Fort Schuyler became so intense that permission was given to some of them to return to the threatened regions and give all the aid in their power. Heber Otis was among those who set forth from the fort and without any attempt at an orderly march were to hasten to the lower part of the Valley. There were three who were in Heber's company, and they had all received word that their own families were in peril of the savage foe. Consequently there was no delay in their march, and though the others dwelt in a region where the peril was greater than that which threatened Heber's own family, there were several reasons why the young soldier

decided to accompany the three men for a part at least of the journey. One of these was his desire to learn how the people who had remained at Cherry Valley had fared, for according to the report they were directly in the pathway of the advancing Senecas. A rude boat was obtained by Heber and his companions, and for the first two days it carried them swiftly down the Mohawk River, whose waters were at the time high above the banks of the stream. On the morning of the third day, however, the craft unfortunately struck a rock, which compelled the occupants to abandon the boat, and at noontime of that day the little band separated, as each man was eager to return to his own family to learn how it had fared with them.

Accordingly, Heber was left to follow his way alone ; but as he was familiar with the entire region, his only fear was that he might run across some band of the prowling Senecas, who were reported to have confined their efforts to the part of the country just in advance of where he then was.

Many a time, as he proceeded cautiously on his way, Heber longed for the company of Timothy, whose trusty rifle had proved its power to aid on many occasions. But not a

word had been heard from the Irishman, nor was it known whether or not he and Joe Elerson had safely delivered their two prisoners into the keeping of the guard at Johnstown. The meaning, too, of the strange letter in his pocket came again into Heber's mind as he pushed forward through the forest (for he had left the open road now), and the initials S. R. signed at the end. Why should Susan have written George Cuck as she did? And why should she urge the Tory to come to her house? These thoughts were uppermost in Heber's mind, and as the night drew on and he began to look about him for a place of refuge, his fears of the prowling Senecas increased. Doubtless they had been informed of the destruction of the Onondaga villages, and angered by the sufferings of their allies were prepared to do their utmost to avenge them.

A thicket of hazel bushes on a knoll near a small stream promised as good a place of shelter as he was likely to find. First making a supper of the food which he had brought from Fort Schuyler and then carefully inspecting the vicinity to make certain that none of his foes were near, he crept into the brush and stretched himself upon the ground, where he was soon soundly sleeping.

It was barely light when he awoke in the morning, but he was instantly alert and crept forth from his hiding-place. The air was vocal with the songs of the birds, and the soft air of the early spring morning was fragrant with the odor of the flowers and trees. It seemed hardly probable that danger could be lurking amidst such surroundings, but Heber was too well skilled in Indian ways to trust himself to any false hopes of safety.

Satisfied after a time that he was indeed alone, he took his hook and line which, like every boy of the frontier, he always carried on his person, and secured a few trout from the noisy little stream below him. As soon as this task had been accomplished, despite his fears he kindled a fire and soon had a breakfast prepared that would have tempted an epicure.

Refreshed by the food, he again looked carefully to the priming of his rifle and then sturdily resumed his advance through the forest. For two hours he continued on his way, and then stopped abruptly as what seemed like the distant report of a rifle was heard. Intently listening, Heber could not hear the sound again, but after a moment of hesitation he changed the direction in which he was

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moving and proceeded toward the place from which the sound had been heard.

Again the faint report rang out, and this time there was no misunderstanding it, for Heber was convinced that it certainly was a rifle which he had heard. With increased caution he moved forward more swiftly, but when the shot was heard once more he did not stop to listen. At such an hour there could be but one meaning to the sound of guns; and persuaded that some one, or perhaps some family, was in distress from a cause which he understood only too well, the young soldier again increased the speed at which he was advancing.

For a time the sounds were not heard again, and though he was somewhat uncertain as to the exact locality he was seeking he still pressed forward without hesitation. A few minutes elapsed, and then again the report sounded in the morning air, but this time it certainly was nearer, and Heber was convinced that he could hear also a faint shout that followed the report. More eagerly the young soldier ran forward, peering about him, as he ran, for some sight of the Indians, but not one could he perceive. He stopped abruptly as he arrived on the border of a

small clearing, and instantly he was aware of the meaning of the shots he had heard.

Before him was a small house of logs, and after a moment he could perceive on the opposite side of the clearing the forms of several Indians darting amongst the trees. The sight caused him hastily to glance all about him, for the discovery he had made implied that other red men might also be there, and perhaps were on the side where he himself was.

Seeking the shelter of a huge maple, he cautiously peered forth as the report of a rifle was again heard, but this time the smoke which could be seen near the house plainly indicated that it was some one within that had fired upon the savages.

It was all clear now to Heber. Some prowling band had attacked the house of some settler (Heber had no knowledge of the dwellers here) and doubtless had been held back by the inmates. Usually the Indians abandoned an unsuccessful attack when morning came, but the very fact that they still were there convinced Heber that the defenders must be weak.

Heber turned sharply and glanced behind him as the sound of a snapping branch was heard. Not ten yards away he beheld an Indian,

who from his action was apparently unaware of the presence of the young white man, for he was stepping carelessly, and his eyes were fixed upon the log house in the distance.

For an instant Heber was tempted to raise his rifle to his shoulder and fire upon the unsuspecting man; but quickly concluding that it would be wise to have his presence unknown as long as possible, he dropped to the ground and crawled upon his hands and knees to the base of another tree. His excitement was keen now, and for a moment he remained motionless and listened intently. The sound of a grunt or low exclamation caused him to look up, and standing not more than three feet in front of the place where he himself was lying was the Indian. His back was toward the young soldier, and it was plain that he was without a suspicion that a white man was nearer than the little cabin in the clearing.

Without pausing to consider what the effect of his attempt might be, Heber cautiously arose, and crouching low he threw himself with all his strength against the back of the red man. The Indian fell face foremost to the ground, flinging his rifle far to one side in the fall, and Heber instantly raised

his own rifle to his shoulder as he prepared himself to meet the onslaught which he had no question would now be made upon him.

To his entire surprise, however, the Seneca (for Heber could see that the warrior belonged to that nation) as he scrambled to his feet gave one glance at the young soldier, and then with a yell bounded into the clearing and began to run at his utmost speed toward the opposite side, where Heber had seen the other members of the attacking party.

The Seneca, however, had not fled halfway across the open space before there was the report of a rifle discharged in the cabin, and the Indian fell forward upon the ground, and this time did not rise.

A wild yell from the opposite side of the clearing greeted the fall of the Seneca, but the silence quickly returned, and for a time Heber could not discover any one amongst the trees where the band had been concealed. The young soldier was trembling in his excitement, and again looked carefully about him for signs of the presence of others, but not a man could be seen. Apparently he was now alone on the side where he was, and his own presence was not as yet known by the Indians he had seen.

Securing the rifle, which the Seneca had not attempted to recover, Heber examined its priming, and placing it against the tree near which he was standing so that he might use it when occasion demanded, he remained motionless save as he frequently peered into the forest about him, awaiting further developments.

For a time the silence was unbroken. He could see again the forms of the red men across the clearing, and from their actions he was convinced that they either were preparing for a combined attack upon the cabin or were about to depart from the place. The latter suggestion seemed to Heber the more plausible, for he well knew that the custom of the Indians was to abandon an attack when it had been prolonged.

He speedily perceived that the Senecas were about to rush forth from the forest, and from their actions he was convinced they meant to surround the house. Doubtless it was their final effort to drive the defenders from its shelter.

In a moment, with a wild yell, at least twenty of the howling savages darted from the woods and began to run swiftly toward the cabin. The time for delay had passed, Heber instantly decided, and quickly raising

his rifle he fired at the scattered advancing band, then dropping the weapon he seized the other rifle and lifted it to his shoulder. Before his finger pressed the trigger, however, two quick sharp reports were heard from the border to his left, and two of the running warriors fell. Intensely excited by the unexpected sounds, Heber quickly discharged the rifle in his hands, and then, convinced that he had recognized the double report he had heard as the work of Timothy Murphy, he sent forth a quick sharp shout and instantly turned to reload his two guns.

CHAPTER XIX

A HARDY PIONEER

THE band of Senecas, startled by the shots which had been heard from two sides of the clearing, as well as by the fall of several of their own number, stopped for a moment in confusion and then with a yell seized the bodies of their fallen companions and fled back to the forest to the place from which they had emerged. Excited as Heber was by the precipitate flight of the warriors, he did not step forth from his hiding-place, but remained where he was, eagerly watching for some sign of the plans of the savages. Ordinarily, as he was aware, the Indians would not remain long after the failure of a concerted rush like that which they had just made; but as he was by no means certain they would depart now he remained behind the great tree where he had taken his stand, peering eagerly forth at the opposite side of the clearing.

The minutes passed slowly, and not a sound came from the woods. The little cabin too gave no indications how its inmates had fared.

The silence was becoming oppressive to the impatient young soldier, but still he dared not venture forth from his shelter. Both his guns were loaded and prepared for use, and although he held one of them in his hands during his vigil he had not once seen an Indian since the yelling band had fled back to the security of the adjacent forest.

Suddenly Heber was startled by the sound of a familiar voice close behind him, and turning instantly about he beheld the smiling face of Timothy Murphy peering at him.

"Faith, an' th' bye is a jewel! Oi'm thinkin' it's Gin'ral Washington himsilf what'll now be afther sindin' for th' lad."

"Tim, where did you come from?" demanded Heber excitedly.

"Did n't yez hear me whin me roifle dropped two o' th' haythen?"

"Yes, yes, Tim. I heard you. I thought 't was your rifle, but how is it that you are here? You're the last man I expected to see."

"Sure, an' it's a warrm welcome yez be afther givin' me, lad," laughed Timothy.

"Have the Senecas gone?" said Heber eagerly.

"Iv'ry one o' thim is gone; even th' dead ones did n't want t' stay."

"Are you sure?"

"Am Oi sure, is it? Well, thin, Oi saw wid me own oyes th' whole crowd o' thim trailin' off through th' trees. In course they may coom back ag'in, but they've gone on, iv'ry one o' thim, for th' onct."

"Who lives in this house, Tim?" inquired Heber, glancing toward the little cabin as he spoke.

"Sure an' Cap'n Ricker was livin' here last noight. Whether he's livin' here now is more'n Oi can be afther tellin' yez. He an' his family maybe have all been shot, Oi dunno."

"We must go to the house right away, Tim."

"Ach, it's th' hid yez be afther havin', Haber, lad! 'T is th' very thing Oi was jist goin' t' suggest to yez."

"We'll have to be careful, Tim, or they'll take us for some of the Senecas. We'd better call and let them know we're coming."

"Yis, an' let th' haythen know jist how many we be, too."

"You said the redskins had gone, Tim."

"Sure an' so Oi did, lad; but Oi did n't say they would n't come back, I dunno."

"Do you think they will, Tim?"

"Faith an' no one knows what th' yellin' haythen will be afther doin'. But yez moight try a bit o' a call t' th' house, me bye."

Heber at once turned and looked at the little cabin, which still betrayed no sign that it was occupied. "Hello! Hello the house!" shouted Heber, placing his hands about his mouth. "We're friends. Let us in!"

No response was made to the hail, and Timothy after a brief pause said quickly, "Come on, Haber. They'll see we're none o' th' Senecas, though they may have a bit uv a doubt as to jist where yez do belong, seein' as yer face is n't jist th' color it once was. Come on. Come on, lad."

Timothy at once stepped forth into the clearing, an example which Heber at once followed, and together the two men proceeded toward the house. Confident that they would be recognized at least as white men, they moved swiftly across the clearing. If the dark-eyed Senecas were watching they did not betray their presence, and neither of the two men had been fired upon when they arrived in front of the cabin. The door was hastily opened from within as Heber and Timothy drew near, and without a word both quickly

entered, and then the heavy door was closed again and securely barred.

As Heber looked about him he perceived two bodies, one of an old man and the other of a lad two or three years younger than himself, placed on the floor at one side of the room. Upon the bed at the opposite side of the room was a woman plainly suffering, but still alive. Before him was a man whose right arm was hanging helpless by his side, and a younger man was also moving about in the room, and it was evident too that he had received a wound in one of his arms.

"'Tis th' top o' th' mornin' t' yez, Mr. Ricker," said Timothy glibly, though the sympathy of the Irishman was apparent in the glance he bestowed upon the people before him.

"You came at just the right time," responded the man whom Timothy had addressed as Mr. Ricker. "I am grateful to you for your aid and that of this young man," he added, turning to Heber as he spoke.

"Don't mention it. 'Tis little we did beside what we 'd a' been glad t' do."

"May I ask your name?"

"Timothy Murphy, an' at yer sarvice," replied the Irishman, bowing low.

"What! Are you the rifleman? Are you one of Morgan's men?"

"Oi am thot," responded Timothy proudly. "An' this lad is Haber —"

"It was a piece of good fortune for us that you came when you did," interrupted Mr. Ricker. "I don't know that we could have held out much longer."

"Yez don't look jist as if yez were enjoyin' th' best o' health, an' that's a fact," suggested Timothy as he glanced about the room.

"The redskins came upon us last night just at dusk," explained Mr. Ricker. "That old man, my father," he added, "and my boy there beside him were in the barn when the yelling savages broke from the woods. Neither my father nor my boy was armed, and they ran for the house at the first warning. The boy might have made it all right if he had been alone, but he probably stopped to help his grandfather. At all events, they both were shot just before they reached the house. We managed to get them inside, but the old man was dead, and my boy did not live more than half an hour. Before we could get them inside, my wife," and Mr. Ricker glanced at the woman on the bed, "was shot in the leg and I in the arm. My other

son was hit by a bullet in the elbow while he was aiming through the porthole at the Indians. All night long the savages tried to batter down the door or set fire to the house, but we managed to beat them off. Our powder gave out this morning, and I am sure the redskins must have suspected it, for they were making a great rush when you two men fired upon them. I am grateful to you both," Mr. Ricker added quietly.

"Ach, 't is glorious. It bates th' worrld!" exclaimed Timothy delightedly.

"I don't know that I understand just what you mean."

"Sure an' whin did two did min an' two wid their arrms shot t' payces, t' say nothin' uv a woman wid a shot in her lig, bate off such a crowd o' th' yellin' haythen? 'T is th' biggest foight in America, I dunno."

Somehow Mr. Ricker appeared to have no share in the Irishman's delight, and as soon as he had placed food on the table for his unexpected guests he turned at once to minister to the wants of his own suffering household. In a brief time the two guests joined him, though Mr. Ricker explained that there was little they could do now to aid him.

"An' yez had no warnin' o' th' comin' o'

th' haythen?" inquired Timothy after the needs of the sufferers, including Mr. Ricker himself, had received attention.

"Yes, sir. We knew they were likely to come. We've had word of their doings. Some of the people hereabout have been carried away prisoners, houses have been burned, and some of our nearest neighbors have been shot. It seems to be a general uprising of the Indians, and all parts, at least in the middle and southern sections of the valley, are suffering from it."

"An' what for did yez not lave the place, I dunno?" demanded Timothy.

"We thought we would not be attacked, or could hold the place if we were."

"An' now will yez be after goin' wid us?"

"I can't go now," said Mr. Ricker sadly.

"Sure an' yez can go," said Timothy eagerly.

"Haber here an' mesilf —"

"No, no. We can't leave now. My wife can't walk, my son and I are wounded, and my other son and my father are dead."

"Faith, an' yez'll all be dead if yez stay here."

"We cannot go."

Timothy ceased to urge the man when he became aware of his decision to remain, and

turning in his perplexity to Heber he said,
“An’ what’ll we do, lad, I dunno?”

“I must go on,” said Heber quietly, for the uprising of the tribes had increased his anxiety for his own people.

“Faith, an’ Oi can’t be after lavin’ th’ man like this,” responded Timothy, glancing in his perplexity first at the bodies of the dead and then at the woman on the bed.

“You stay here, Tim. The Senecas may come back to-night, and your rifle will be needed.”

“An’ suppose, lad, yez happen t’ run across th’ haythen yersilf?”

“I’ll have to do the best I can, Tim. I don’t believe I’ll have so much trouble in the daytime as I would if I was going at night. And I must go,” Heber added decidedly.
“And I must start now.”

“All right, thin. ’Tis good luck Oi’m wishin’ yez.”

“Tim, did you leave George Cuck at Johnstown?”

“Oi did not,” replied the Irishman in confusion.

“You did n’t? Where did you leave him?”

“Faith, an’ th’ rascal lift me. He an’ th’ haythen wid him jist started off widout so much as sayin’ ‘How arre yez.’”

"You let them get away from you?" demanded Heber angrily.

"Ye see 't was loike this," explained the Irishman. "Th' Tory did n't give us one bit o' trouble all the firrst day. He was that gintle we almost thought we'd made a mistake. An thin th' firrst we knew one noight, he up an' lift us."

"Where did they go?"

"An' that's what me friend Joe Elerson do be afther thryin' t' discover, lad."

"Why did n't you go with Joe and help?"

"Faith an' Oi did thot, till Oi heard Oi was naded here."

"Is that why you did n't come to Fort Schuyler?"

"Yis, sorr. 'T was that disapp'inted, Haber, Oi was, that me appetoite has failed me entoirely. Oi have n't had a bite nor a bit —"

"I'm going, Tim," interrupted Heber quickly. "I can't stay here any longer."


"Bad luck t' yer inimies, Haber," responded Timothy, apparently relieved that his friend did not insist upon hearing more of the details of the escape of George Cuck from his captors.

The young soldier hastily explained to Mr. Ricker that the necessity of going on to the place where his family was did not permit him

to remain longer, and as soon as the good-bys had been spoken Heber with his rifle upon his shoulder departed from the house. Timothy's decision to stay for a day or two was almost broken when his friend started across the clearing, but the unspoken appeal of the stricken family was not to be lightly disregarded, and the warm-hearted Irishman, after he had watched the young soldier until he had disappeared in the forest, turned reluctantly back into the house.

Left to himself, Heber Otis pushed eagerly forward through the sombre forest. Aware that his movements might be seen and that he might be followed by the Senecas, who evidently were present in numbers, he increased his precautions as he advanced. Frequently he stopped to assure himself that no one was on his trail as well as to make certain none of his lurking foes were before him. For an hour or more he continued steadily on his way, and not a sign of the presence of the red men had been discovered. He was in a region now where he was much more familiar with the country, and there was slight danger of his losing his way.

Heber had arrived at a clearing which he recognized as one where a friend of his father's



had dwelt, but as he peered at the little cabin he perceived that apparently it had been deserted by its occupants. Glancing about him to assure himself that his actions were not being observed, the young soldier walked swiftly across the clearing and approached the house, determined to satisfy himself that no such misfortune had befallen the people that had dwelt there as that which he had seen in the household of Mr. Ricker.

The door of the house was open, and Heber cautiously approached it, stepping noiselessly as he drew near, and fearful of the sight upon which he might look when he could see within the house.

The sight which greeted his eyes was appalling, though it was different from that which he had feared. A half-dozen or more hideously painted Senecas were in the cabin, and at the very moment of Heber's discovery of their presence they too became aware of his approach.

CHAPTER XX

A HIDING-PLACE

THE startling sight of the Senecas within the cabin caused Heber instantly to leap to one side, and exerting all his strength he bounded into the nearby forest and began to run at his utmost speed. The yell which had greeted him was not repeated, but the young soldier was aware that his foes would doubtless follow him at once, and the knowledge of the pursuit was sufficient of itself to provide all the incentives he required. Heedless of the direction in which he was fleeing, he ran swiftly among the trees, leaping over the fallen timbers and relying more upon the rapidity of his flight than upon the protection of surroundings. Fleet of foot as Heber was, he was aware that his pursuers were equally fleet, and that their powers of endurance were far greater than his own. The very desperation of his plight served to increase the swiftness with which he was running, and for a half-hour he continued his efforts, never

once glancing behind him for a view of the pursuing Senecas.


His strength, however, now began to fail him. His breath was coming in gasps, and a sharp pain in his left side almost compelled him to stop and find some relief. He was looking about him for some place that might serve as a hiding-place, but the region was more open where he then was, and instead of his peril passing he realized that it was increased by the more open character of the forest. For the first time he breathlessly turned and peered keenly behind him, but although he was not able to perceive any of the Indians he did not relax his efforts, and again sped forward, assured that the pursuit had not been abandoned.

Before him he perceived a noisy little brook not more than ten feet wide, and the sight, together with the pain he was suffering, caused him instantly to form a plan which he at once began to execute. Stepping heavily upon the shore so that the print of his feet could be plainly seen, he leaped into the stream and made his way to the opposite bank. There too he pressed his feet heavily upon the ground and advanced a few feet into the adjacent forest. Excitedly he then turned about and retraced his

way to the brook, moving swiftly and stepping with caution in the tracks he had made; and as soon as he had gained the bank he waded downstream in the water for several yards, peering all about him as he did so for some place of concealment. A low exclamation escaped his lips as he became aware that the desired shelter was not to be gained there, and then resolutely he retraced his way, still wading in the stream, and passed farther up the brook, beyond the place where he had crossed.

His fears and anxieties were now redoubled as the minutes passed swiftly, and all the time he maintained a careful watch upon the forest where his enemies would first be seen. Not one had as yet been discovered, and the eagerness of the young soldier increased as a ray of hope now appeared.

Near the bank at his right was a tree which had been torn from its hold by the wind and had fallen against another tree. The position of the trunk instantly suggested a plan to Heber, and with his rifle still in his hands, for the young soldier had resolutely clung to the weapon throughout his flight, he contrived to throw himself upon the leaning tree in such a manner that his feet did not touch the soft earth beneath.



Scrambling up the inclined trunk he seized a limb of the supporting tree, and crawling from branch to branch was enabled to pass to a third tree whose branches interlaced with those of the tree into which he had climbed. Beyond this it was impossible for him to proceed, but nearer the top the leaves which had already appeared were thicker, and might perhaps hide him from the sight of any one passing on the ground below, unless he should be searching for some one in the tree itself.

Seated upon a branch close to the trunk and twenty-five feet or more above the base, Heber clung to the body of the tree with one arm, swung his rifle up so that its muzzle rested upon the limb where he was seated, and then with a sigh of relief settled back for the watch upon which he entered immediately. He could see the banks of the brook, but it was not possible to look far into the depths of the forest. Although he was aware that his hiding-place was by no means certain to conceal him from the keen-eyed Senecas, yet the breathing-spell which he now obtained was doubly grateful. His face was streaming with perspiration and his hands were still trembling from the violence of his recent exertions, but his fears did not permit him to heed such

slight matters, and he peered down at the banks of the stream, fearing and yet expecting to behold the Indians in pursuit.

Nor had he long to wait, for only a few minutes elapsed before he beheld four of the hideously-painted savages slowly and cautiously moving up the banks of the brook, two of the warriors searching on either side. Almost fascinated by the sight, Heber clutched the tree to which he was clinging more tightly and watched the men, not one of whom had as yet lifted his eyes to the forest.

A low call from one of the warriors on the bank near where Heber had clambered into the leaning tree caused his companions to come quickly to the place where the Seneca had stopped, and a hasty consultation followed. The young soldier was unable to hear what was said, but the actions of the Senecas convinced him that they must have discovered some trace of his presence there. The bed of the stream was stony, and Heber did not believe that his feet had left any imprint there, but the warriors certainly had made a discovery of some interest to them, for they were all conversing excitedly, though in low tones, and occasionally one of them pointed

eagerly back into the forest from which they themselves had just emerged.

Heber's excitement increased as he watched the men. If he should be discovered he was determined that he would at least discharge his rifle once, although in the end it might avail but little. Grimly he perceived in a moment that the Senecas divided, one passing up the stream, one re-crossing to the opposite side, and the remaining two at once turning into the forest near the very place where the young soldier was hidden.

It was impossible for Heber to see the two warriors when they had moved a few feet back from the bank, and consequently he was in ignorance of their actions. Convinced, however, that his own peril was increased, Heber clung close to the tree, moving neither his feet nor his arms, and scarcely daring to draw a full breath. His heart was beating fiercely, and his grasp on his rifle tightened.

Not even the sound of the footfalls of the two Senecas could be heard, and as they had not spoken, the tense silence of the forest remained unbroken until a chattering squirrel ran out on the end of the branch upon which Heber was seated and noisily scolded the

intruder for his presence there. The young soldier glared at the defiant little animal, but as he dared not move or speak he was unable to stop the noisy protest. Fearful lest the presence of the scolding squirrel might attract the attention of the Indians, Heber shook his head at the angry creature, but was unable to frighten it or cause it to abandon its protests for a time.

All idea of time seemed to Heber to have gone. Whether for hours or minutes he had been clinging to the tree he would have been unable to determine. The one great fear, which absorbed all other thoughts, was that of discovery by his enemies, and breathless with suspense he waited for some token. Every moment he expected to hear the shout that would announce the finding of his hiding-place. But the time slowly passed, and the tense silence was still unbroken.

Glancing down at the place on the bank from which the two warriors had departed when they reëntered the forest, Heber was astounded to behold both men again there. They were conversing eagerly, and one was pointing excitedly down the stream. His companion evidently was protesting, and after a brief time the other Indian withdrew and

started down the bank, while the former at once seated himself near the spot. The silence had once more returned to the forest, but Heber was convinced by what he had just seen that the pursuit, instead of having been abandoned, was to be continued, and he suspected that the place where the warrior was seated was to be the spot where after a time all four would reassemble.

The thought caused Heber to determine to leave his hiding-place if possible before the return of the searching Senecas. He could see the head of the red man who had remained, but the rest of his body was hidden from sight by the intervening trees and branches. For a moment Heber was tempted to fire at the tempting target. The report of his rifle would of course be heard by the other Senecas and would reveal his own presence, but the young soldier was convinced that the warriors for some reason were already persuaded that he was in the vicinity, and the shot would merely confirm them in their suspicion. One of his enemies at least would be disposed of, if he should fire, and before his friends could return to his aid Heber was convinced that he could place a good distance between himself and his foes. Night would soon be near, and in the

oncoming darkness his chances of escaping would be greatly increased.

Slowly the young soldier drew up his rifle and prepared to fire at the head of the unsuspecting savage, but at that very moment the Indian arose and stepped farther back among the trees and could no longer be seen. Instantly Heber decided to descend from his position in the tree and attempt to withdraw from the spot. With great caution he moved from branch to branch until he had gained the lowest; then, without hesitating a moment, he dropped softly to the ground.

“Heap good! Paleface come from sky.”

Heber turned sharply at the startling words, and not more than two yards in his rear beheld the Seneca standing and watching him, a broad grin spreading over his face as he spoke. Almost instinctively the young soldier raised his rifle, and aiming at the warrior pulled the trigger as the Seneca bounded quickly to one side. The hammer fell with a thud, but no report followed. In the descent of the tree the priming had been shaken from the pan, Heber realized almost instinctively, and then he instantly darted behind the tree which a moment before he had descended.

The Seneca was armed with a rifle also,

but as Heber fled to his shelter the warrior seized his tomahawk, but did not throw it, as the refuge had been so quickly gained. No sooner had Heber darted behind the tree than he realized that the trunk was scarcely large enough to shelter him. He crouched close to the tree, endeavoring to protect himself, and yet realizing that even to attempt to reload his rifle would be impossible, for the moment his hand or arm should be exposed it would become a target for the rifle or tomahawk of his enemy. He grasped his rifle by the muzzle and then stood awaiting the actions of the Seneca. Bitterly the young soldier reproached himself for having left his shelter in the tree. Darkness would soon come, and if he had only delayed he might have secured its protection, which would more than have counterbalanced the return of the other Indians.

"No hurt. No scalp. Paleface come," called the Seneca.

Heber did not respond to the invitation, convinced as he was that such an act would be but to destroy his last opportunity of escape, slight as that might be. In a moment he was aware that the Seneca was endeavoring to circle the tree and at a safe distance shoot, or

throw his tomahawk at the man behind the trunk. Instantly realizing what the plan was, Heber slowly moved as the warrior advanced, keeping his body protected by the tree, and peering at the Seneca all the time and watchful of his every movement.

A few yards away was a larger tree, and despite the peril of the attempt Heber instantly decided to seek its shelter. Summoning all his powers to his aid, he darted across the intervening space, his unexpected appearance greeted by a yell which was instantly followed by the tomahawk of the Seneca. Heber had purposely been dodging about as he leaped forward, and fortunately, although the weapon grazed his ear, it did not hit, and remained fast in the tree where it struck. Hastily seizing it, Heber darted behind the sheltering tree and again was safe for the moment. Intensely excited and fearful of another attack, he did not attempt to reload his rifle, and stood with the hatchet in his hand prepared to defend himself. He was not unskilled in the use of the weapon he was holding, and in the event of the Seneca exposing himself he purposed to make use of it.

Nor had he long to wait. The Indian, crouching low and holding the rifle in his hands,


was soon seen again creeping in a circle and plainly attempting to gain the rear of the young soldier and fire upon him. It was not difficult for Heber to move as the Seneca advanced and keep the sheltering tree between him and his enemy, but as the Indian came a little nearer Heber suddenly hurled the tomahawk, putting his utmost strength into the throw. The action apparently was unexpected, for the missile struck the rifle from the Seneca's hand, though whether the warrior himself was severely wounded Heber was unable to determine, for the red man bounded into the forest and instantly disappeared from sight. Hastily Heber loaded and carefully primed his rifle, and then as the Indian still could not be seen he decided to flee from the spot. Before he had darted from the place, a cry arose in the forest below him which quickly was answered by one from within the woods, and a third cry came from the region above him. Realizing that his enemies were now all about him, the young soldier hesitated for a brief moment and then swiftly ran to the bank of the brook.

CHAPTER XXI

A CONFERENCE

WITHOUT hesitating a moment Heber began to run swiftly down the bank of the noisy brook, peering eagerly before him for signs of the presence of his enemies. He had not advanced far when a sound from the forest at his left caused him to leap into the waters and crouching low to run for a time down the bed of the stream. Every moment he was fearful of the appearance of some Seneca before him or of hearing the shrill cry from behind that would announce the discovery of his flight by his persistent pursuers.

Suddenly not far before him he perceived in a bend in the stream a little bay or cove where the waters were still. Projecting from the shore was a mass of dead branches that had been caught by the intervening bank and heaped up in the place where the waters were quiet. The sight instantly suggested a scheme to the mind of the excited young soldier, and at once increasing his speed, he discovered as he waded into the little bay that the water



there came well up to his waist. With eager haste he tore apart the accumulated brush, and sinking into the water, with trembling hands again drew the dead branches over his head. He still clung to his rifle, but as it was thrust beneath the surface of the stream he was aware that it was now useless save as a club in his hands. The water itself was cold, but the sole thought in Heber's mind was to find some secure hiding-place, and he did not even attempt to protect his gun.

In a brief time he was concealed, and if no one had been watching him during his hasty efforts he believed that for the time at least he was safe. He could peer out between the dead branches that covered him, and though his position was cramped and he was chilled by the water, nevertheless for the first time in hours he believed his chance of escaping from the region was not altogether hopeless.

For a time he waited and watched eagerly for any indication that his presence was known, but as the moments slowly passed and not one of the Senecas was seen or heard, his confidence increased, although at the same time the difficulty of remaining in his cramped position became more evident. The sun by this time was just above the horizon, and already the

shade of the forest was deepening. If he could remain where he was until darkness should spread over all, Heber thought, then he would creep from the place where he was concealed, and the difficulty of making his way to the road that led to Schenectady would be less, and there was no fear in the young soldier's mind of losing himself.

For a half-hour longer he remained crouching beneath the brush, and his body was now so thoroughly chilled that his teeth were chattering, and it was only by the use of his will that he compelled himself to remain motionless. Realizing the necessity that was upon him, however, he resolutely did not stir, and still listened intently for any sounds that might betray the presence of the warriors who were searching for him.

Suddenly the bushes on the bank not more than ten feet away parted, and George Cuck and Hide Sam stepped forth into plain view. Alarmed as Heber was by the startling and unexpected sight, it became apparent in a brief time that neither of the men was suspicious of Heber's presence. Both were gazing up the stream, and as Heber watched them, he could see that they were apparently looking for some one to come.

"Sam, they 're not here," George Cuck remarked at last.

"No here," assented the Indian.

"This is where we agreed to meet. There 's the dead tree on the other bank and here 's the cove. It 's sundown too, and that was the time we agreed upon."

"No here. Come pretty quick."

"Give your call, Sam. They may be somewhere near."

Thus bidden, Hide Sam imitated the cry of a night-hawk and repeated what plainly was a signal several times. No response was heard, however, and soon George Cuck said impatiently, —

"I never knew Aaron to be late before. Something must have happened."

"Aaron come."

"We might as well sit down then, Sam. It has been a long tramp to-day."

As the Tory at once seated himself upon the bank his Indian companion followed his example, and for a brief time both were silent. Heber still was enabled to see the men from his hiding-place, and, unmindful of his discomfort, he watched them with an excitement that steadily increased.

"'T was a good thing for you, Sam, that

we gave Tim Murphy the slip," suggested George Cuck.

"Good for white man too," retorted the Onondaga.

"You mean me?" laughed the Tory. "Oh, I don't know about that. I didn't try to use a knife on Phil Schuyler."

"He heap good man."


"Who? Phil Schuyler? Oh, yes, I know he gave orders that you were not to be hurt, Sam, but that was n't because he was 'good.' It was because he was afraid."

"Humph!"

"It's so, Sam. He thought you'd be good, too, when you found out that he was n't going to follow you up. Did you ever see such a blockhead as that Irishman, Tim Murphy?" the Tory added with a laugh.

"Heap good with gun."

"Yes, he can shoot. There's no mistake about that. I've seen him do it myself. But what a fool we made of him, Sam. The idea of his believing us when we told him that story about Heber Otis. I wish I had the young rascal right here!" said George Cuck savagely. "I'd never give him a chance to fool us the way we fooled Tim. And such a fool!"



The Tory threw back his head and laughed aloud, and Hide Sam also gave a chuckle which indicated that he shared in his companion's delight at the recollection of something evidently connected with their escape from the Irishman.

"Where Heber now?" inquired the Onondaga after a brief silence.

"That's what I'd like to know myself, Sam. The last I heard of him he was on his way to Fort Schuyler. Sam, probably he was one of the villains that helped burn up the Onondaga villages."

A low exclamation from Hide Sam was all that Heber could hear, but the young soldier had no question as to what the guttural sound implied.

"Never mind, Sam. We'll get even with him yet. I've got a trap fixed for him and he'll walk straight into it, too."

"Where trap?"

"I'm not telling. But he'll be caught this time, and he won't have time to say his prayers either when he is caught." George Cuck spoke savagely, and Heber had no doubt that his enemy's intention was as good as his word. What the "trap" was, however, he could not even conjecture.

"How many scalps did you get, Sam?" demanded the Tory.

"Four, six."

"Forty-six!"

"No. Four, six."

"You did well, you Onondaga thief!" laughed George Cuck. "I did n't get but two."

"Get more maybe."

"We'll get more when Butler's Greens are all ready. It's strange nobody shows up here, Sam," added George Cuck as he arose and peered intently into the adjacent forest. "It's time every one was here. Give your call again, you rascal!"

Thus bidden, the cry of a night hawk again arose upon the stillness, and in a moment an answering cry came from the depths of the forest on the opposite side of the brook.

"There they are!" exclaimed George Cuck eagerly. "They've shown up at last! Give it again, Sam. Let 'em know where we are."

Once more the weird cry sounded, and again there was a response from the woods. Both the Tory and his Indian companion were standing now, and Heber could see that they were gazing excitedly into the darkening forest.

"Stay here, Sam," said George Cuck sharply. "We'll miss them if we try to go where they are. This is the spot, anyway, where they were to meet us."

Heber's excitement at the approach of others to the bank near which he was concealed became more intense now. Curious as he was as to what the meeting might imply, his own desire to flee from the place was so strong that it was only by compelling himself to be still that he was enabled to remain in his cramped position. In a brief time he was aware that men were near them, and soon he heard splashing in the water of the brook as they crossed to the bank where the two men were awaiting their coming. One of the approaching men came so close to the brush beneath which Heber was hidden, that for an instant the young soldier was fearful of discovery; but the Indian passed the spot and quickly gained the bank. Relieved by his narrow escape, Heber peered eagerly at the assembly before him. Two white men dressed, as he could see in the dim light, in the garb or "uniform" of Butler's Greens were there, and one who was clad in the ordinary hunting suit of the times. In addition to the three white men five Indians also were in

the assembly. There was no possibility of escaping now, as Heber well understood, and in fear he listened intently as he watched the men before him.

"You're late," said George Cuck gruffly.

"We lost a man back here, or rather the Senecas did," explained one of the white men.

"The fellow gave us the slip, and for the life of me I can't see how he did it."

"Never mind him," retorted the Tory. "There'll be plenty of chances to find him again. If our plan works out there won't be many to get away. What's the word you are to give me?"

"There has been a bit of a delay —"

"Delay! Delay!" interrupted George Cuck angrily. "It's always a delay. What's wrong now?"

"The Senecas are all right. The Onondagas are ready and the Cayugas are in as much haste as you are. The trouble is that some of the Mohawks have n't come down from Canada yet, and —"

"It's the Mohawks that have been busy on the other side of the valley," again interrupted the impatient Tory. "What's the trouble with Brant anyway?"

"There is n't any trouble, but a redskin

will always take his own time and have his own way, too. Brant has been working hard with the Oneidas. He wants them to come in, but they don't like Butler, and then Brant believes if they're left out they'll help the rebels. You see they live — ”

“ That's just it ! That's just it ! If Brant and Butler would just leave the Oneidas out and not try to do anything except to give them some of the same thing the rebels'll have, the whole thing would be done. It's this holding back and holding back that's going to upset everything. Before we know it, the rebels will find out what our plan is and they'll have men enough to stop us. If we go right at it now, we can fix it so there won't be a rebel left between Fort Schuyler and Albany. I tell you it was a mistake to let any of the redskins begin till we were ready for the whole thing. What's the word you have for me, anyway ? ”

“ You're to go to — ” The voice of the speaker became so low that Heber was unable to hear what was said, though he bent forward until his covering almost parted. He was positive that he heard the words “ friends in Albany,” “ Schenectady,” “ men from Canada,” “ Butler and Johnson ” — the last

being repeated several times. What the connection was however he was unable to determine. Two of the Indians also engaged in the conversation, but it was carried on now in still lower tones, so that it was lost upon the listening young soldier.

"Then I'm to go there to-night, am I?" demanded George Cuck in a louder voice as the conference ended.

"That's what Butler said," replied the white man who apparently was the leader.

"You're sure what Aaron reported is true?"

"There's no reason to doubt it."

"And I'm to report to Butler within a week?"

"Sooner if you can. You are in such haste you probably can do it in less time."

"It's like running my neck into a noose, but I'll try it."

In a brief time the newcomers had departed, and George Cuck and Hide Sam were left alone on the bank. There was another brief low conversation between the two, and as soon as it was ended the Onondaga moved swiftly into the forest, departing in the direction from which the party that had joined them had come.

George Cuck still remained upon the bank after the departure of his companion. As Heber watched the man from his hiding-place the anger of the young soldier blazed forth afresh. Before him was the Tory whom he believed to be the most treacherous of all the enemies of the patriots. If his rifle were only ready for use Heber knew that the plan which had been formed would never be carried out; but George Cuck was armed, while he himself was without any means of defense. The impulse of the young soldier was too strong, however, to be entirely resisted, and a moment later Heber Otis had acted.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LETTER SIGNED "S. R."

THE darkness had deepened by this time, and trusting to its friendly protection, Heber slowly and cautiously crept from his hiding-place and safely gained the shelter of the forest in the rear of the place where George Cuck had been standing. Unmindful of the chill which his long stay in the cold waters had produced, Heber then advanced cautiously, darting from tree to tree, until he approached the bank once more and looked about him for the Tory. His own rifle was useless, for it had been filled with water, but as George Cuck was not aware of his predicament, Heber was confident that if he acted boldly his very boldness would accomplish for him what he most desired — the securing of the treacherous man who was ignorant of his presence and plight.

Excitedly Heber peered all about him, but George Cuck could not anywhere be seen. Only a few minutes had been used by Heber in his cautious approach, and he had not be-


lieved that his enemy would depart, or at least be so far from the spot that he could not be seen. But the man assuredly was gone.

Satisfied after a careful inspection that he was alone in the place, Heber did not long delay, and passing down the shore soon crossed the brook and proceeded swiftly on his way. His exertions served to restore a measure of warmth to his chilled body, and the continued fear of discovery made him alert and watchful as he sped on through the forest. In spite of his fear for his own safety, the conversation he had overheard between George Cuck and the white man that had met the Tory on the bank of the stream continually recurred to him. The man's voice had sounded strangely familiar, but the light had not been sufficiently clear to enable him to see his face. And yet he was positive that the man was no stranger, and again and again he endeavored to recall the tones of the voice, and thereby determine who he was. But the night passed and the dawn appeared, and still all that Heber was able to make of the interview was that the Indians and Butler's Greens were about to assemble, although he had not been able to learn for what purpose, or where the meeting-place was to be.

The returning light relieved the young soldier in a measure of his fears, and as he was now walking rapidly along the familiar road that led to Schenectady, despite his weariness he was eager to continue on his way. Already he had carefully drawn the wet charge from his rifle, and though he knew that the weapon was not to be relied upon as yet, he still was confident that his need of its aid was not as strong as it had recently been, for he was in the more open country now, where his enemies were less inclined to appear than in the more remote and lonely settlements.

In spite of his eagerness to be at home again, Heber determined to stop at the home of Susan Randall and learn how she and her family had fared during his long absence. There was slight probability of George Cuck or any of his foes being found there now, and the peril of meeting them, accordingly, was less to be feared.

As the little log house of the Randalls soon could be seen upon the hillside before him Heber eagerly turned into the lane and approached the open door. The day was warm, and the doors and windows of the house were open. Before the stone step the hens were



fluttering in the dust, and the peacefulness of the place seemed to promise the wearied young soldier what he had not found since his departure from Schenectady.

In response to his noisy rapping Susan Randall herself appeared, and the expression of surprise upon her face soon gave place to one of pleasure as she recognized the unexpected visitor, and Heber's words quickly betrayed his own satisfaction.

"Well, Jemima, here I am again," he exclaimed.

"So I see. I am glad to see you, Heber. Come right in, though my name isn't Jemima, as I've told you a score of times. You look tired out."

"I'm tired, but not tired out," laughed Heber as he accepted the invitation. Entering the room, he was noisily greeted by the children, but Mrs. Randall did not appear.

"My mother is at one of our neighbors'," explained Susan. "She was sent for early this morning because there was sickness there."

"Jemima, may I have something to eat?"

"We never turn a beggar away, though 't is n't often we see one here," responded Susan with a laugh. "At least it was n't often any one asked for food before this terrible

war began," she added, her face clouding as she spoke.

"Jemima, I want a dry cloth to clean my gun with."

"Before you have something to eat?"

"While you are getting it for me."

The girl at once sent one of the children to secure what Heber had asked for, and then began to busy herself in the preparation of some breakfast for her visitor. As she moved about in the room, in response to her queries Heber related some of his own experiences since he had last seen her, carefully cleaning his rifle as he talked — a task which even the promise of a good breakfast could not postpone.

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Susan when Heber had told of the destruction of the Onondaga villages. "I'm afraid it will only make matters worse, and from what I hear I think it has done that already."

"You mean the Indians and Tories are at their work again? Let me tell you, Susan, they have only begun. I'm afraid this summer will be the worst the Mohawk Valley ever saw." Heber's face darkened for a moment as he recalled the interview between George Cuck and the strangely familiar

white man whom he still was not able to identify.

"Don't say that," said the girl quickly. "I don't see how they could be worse."

"They can and they will. Susan, why don't you and the family go back with me to Schenectady? You will all be safe there, and if you stay here no one knows what may happen."

"No. We'll stay here," said Susan quietly. "I don't think we'll be harmed."

"You think some of your Tory friends will protect you," said Heber. He had not intended even indirectly to refer to George Cuck, but the words were spoken almost before he was aware of what he had said.

"No one will harm us," said Susan quietly, as she placed upon the table the food which she had prepared and bade Heber seat himself before it.

For a time the feeling of hunger was so strong that the young soldier seldom spoke, though he was aware that Susan was watching him with a much more friendly interest than she had manifested on the occasion of his latest visit. The cause of the change in her manner he did not understand, but he was content to have it so, and decided that he

would not refer once to George Cuck unless she herself should mention his name.

"Where are you going now, Heber?" inquired Susan as the young soldier arose.

"I'm going back to Schenectady soon. I'm going to stay here and talk to you, though, for a little while before I start."

"Where is that dreadful friend of yours?"

"Who? Oh, you mean Tim Murphy, I suppose. I left him back in the country helping a man whose house had just been attacked by the Onondagas or Senecas. Every one in the family had been shot and two were dead."

"Horrible!"

"That's too mild a word. And just think of it, the redskins are set upon by the Tories, and Butler's Greens most of all, to do just such things." Again the words were spoken before the ardent young soldier was aware, and as Susan's face clouded he heartily wished that he had a better control of his tongue.

"They did n't begin the war," suggested Susan tartly.

"No, they did n't," assented Heber. "But what they're doing isn't a part of the war. It's something outside, and it would n't be done if the white men behind them were not worse than the redskins themselves."

"Who hanged Jake?"

"He deserved it."

"Who shot Mr. Service? He didn't deserve it."

"Yes, — he did deserve it! You don't know what you are talking about."

"Oh, I don't?" said Susan scornfully. "Wasn't he shot right in his own house? Didn't that dreadful man fire on him after Mr. Service had been feeding him, just as I have you?"

"No, he didn't! That man Service was a villain. He was one of the worst men in every way, too, you could find in the whole valley. He didn't feed Tim, and what's more, Tim didn't shoot him either."

"Who did shoot him?"

"Joe Elerson. The man had grabbed an axe and was just going to brain Tim when Joe Elerson up with his rifle and shot him."

"That isn't the way I heard it."

"Probably not. George Cuck does n't usually tell things as they are." The word was out now, and the detested man had been referred to in spite of Heber's determination not to speak his name.

"Have you seen George?" said Susan slowly.

"Yes, I have. Have you?"

"He has been here."

"How many times?"

"I shall not tell you, Mr. Otis. I don't see that it concerns you."

"It does concern me, and you, too, Jemima," said Heber warmly. "I tell you—"

"My name is not Jemima, Mr. Otis," interrupted Susan.

"Well, it's a good name whether it's Jemima or Susan," said Heber more mildly. "But, Susan, it won't do you any good to have that sneaking, murdering rascal come here very often."

"Thank you, Mr. Otis. I have seen George Cuck a number of times, but I don't remember that I ever heard him talk as you are talking now."

"But it's true, Jemima," continued Heber eagerly. "He is all that I say and a good many things besides that I can't say. He's—"

"He has been good to my mother."

"But you don't have to write to him, anyway."

"Write to him! What do you mean, Heber Otis?" Susan Randall's black eyes flashed as she angrily faced the young soldier.

"I mean what I say, Jemima," said Heber.

"You have no right to say that." Susan spoke quietly, and if Heber had not been so angry himself he might have seen that the girl was struggling to keep back her tears.

"Tell me, then, what *that* means, will you?"

As Heber spoke he drew from his pocket the missive which he had found in the house of Mr. Service and held it forth to the girl. The paper had been water-soaked, and even now was damp, but it so plainly was an evidence that the girl had not spoken what the young soldier believed to be true, that he was unable to resist the temptation to prove to her that he knew that of which she thought him to be ignorant.

As Susan Randall reached forth her hand and took the letter, Heber watched her face keenly while she read it. Twice she read it through before she spoke, and the expression of her face was unchanged as she handed it back to Heber without a word.

"What have you to say now?" demanded the young soldier triumphantly.

"I have nothing to say."

"You wrote that letter?"

"You say I wrote it."

"But did n't you write it?" persisted

Heber, hoping she would deny any knowledge of the epistle.

"I told you I had nothing more to say," said Susan quietly. "Perhaps you would not mind telling me where you found it."

"You don't know? Where would I have been likely to find it?"

"I have not the slightest idea."

Heber laughed somewhat tauntingly as he thrust the letter again into his pocket and said, "If you don't know, then I shall not tell you."

"Very well."

Angrily Heber seized his rifle and turning about as he approached the door, said, "I don't know that I have any right, Susan, if you really want to have anything to do with George Cuck, to say you shan't. I was just thinking of what was best for you, that's all."

"You are very kind," responded the girl quietly, a trace of a smile appearing for a moment as she spoke.

"Good-by, Susan!" exclaimed Heber abruptly.

"Good-by."

In a moment the young soldier had departed from the house, and was walking swiftly down the lane without once glancing behind

him. If he had looked back at the house he perhaps would have been at a loss to understand the actions of the girl. She had watched the departure of Heber until he was half way down the lane, and then darting swiftly into the front room she had thrown herself upon the bed there, and was weeping bitterly as she buried her face in the pillows.

CHAPTER XXIII

A FAMILIAR VOICE

UNAWARE of the commotion in the house from which he had just departed, Heber continued steadily on his way. He was angry, and yet perplexed and troubled far more than he was willing to acknowledge, by the manner of Susan, as well as by the words she had failed to speak. Just what George Cuck had done for Susan's family or what had been the reason for writing the note which he had discovered in the house of Service was something that seemed to him so strange that not even the well-known sympathy of the Randall household for the enemies of the colonists could entirely account for it.

When at last he arrived at Schenectady the joy of his own people over his safe return and the interest that was manifested in the story of the expedition against the Onondagas for a time banished from his mind the thoughts of the reception which Susan had given him; but as the days passed, his feeling of bitterness began to increase, and he had resolved that

he would not stop again at Susan's home. If she was determined to permit George Cuck to make visits there and even send him letters urging him to come, then he himself was freed from all responsibility, he assured himself, and could look to the needs of households that were far more deserving. And certainly the tales that were told of the midnight attacks, the burned houses, the people carried away captives by the bold warriors of the Senecas and Cayugas, were sufficient to indicate that there was no slight call for such assistance as he might render in many of the homes of the patriotic settlers.

And yet despite his decision, Heber found that he was unable to banish all thoughts of Susan and her unprotected home. Again and again he made inquiries, striving to appear uninterested or indifferent, but not a report came of the deeds of the Randall family. There were too many of the people who were known to be true to the cause of the colonies for any one to concern himself with a Tory household, so long as it did nothing to incur the enmity of the aroused and excited people.

In the midst of all this a new interest had been manifest among the settlers, and Heber speedily discovered that much of his own time

and labor was consumed in the tasks which it brought with it.

On the twenty-fifth of February the Congress had directed the commander-in-chief of the army to take the most effectual means for protecting the defenseless people of the region, and for punishing the Six Nations for their continued depredations. After careful and full consultation, General Washington had decided that the best method would be to send an army into the heart of the Indian country, cut off their villages, destroy their crops, and by attacking the warriors there, teach the red men, not only that the colonial forces were determined to punish them for their treachery, but also to create a condition that would compel the tribes to remain in their own homes and prevent them from making attacks upon the scattered settlers.

The fact that an apparent lull had come in the conflict between the colonies and Great Britain at this very time also served to favor the proposed plan. Washington had now become convinced that it was only by tiring out the king's troops, rather than by conquering them in the field, that the victory for which he longed was at last to be gained. This wisely planned inactivity made it safe to with-

draw some of the soldiers, and use their services in teaching the Indians a lesson that was not only greatly needed by the warriors, but also would serve to protect the people of the frontier, who by day and by night were exposed to their depredations. To some, the measure used at the time seemed to be unduly severe, and so, too, many of the students of history have declared. But the sufferings of the exposed people and the increasing boldness of the Indians, led, as they were, by Brant, and incited and assisted by such men as the Johnsons, the Butlers, and others, who not only gave their advice, but also in person, together with their own white followers, joined in the expeditions, more than justified the apparent harshness of the means and measures employed. War then was no more a holiday than it is now, and the protection of life and property was demanded in the midst of cruelties and depredations that were appalling and increasing.

The Six Nations too were the bravest and boldest, as they were the ablest of the red men whom the redcoats had succeeded in winning to their own side. The people of these nations had acquired not a few of the arts and comforts of civilization. They were governed by

laws that were higher and better than those of other nations of the Indians. They were braver in battle, had greater orators, and were far more skilled in providing for their own wants. Not merely were a few patches of ground cleared and cultivated, as was the custom of all the tribes, but they possessed great fields that had been carefully tilled, and took special pride in the orchards which they planted and cared for with marked skill. The Mohawks at this time had been driven from their homes into Canada, but it was well known that they could easily return and were eager to regain the lands of their forefathers. The Oneidas were friendly to the colonists, but their friendship was something likely to be broken easily, and the fear of their breaking away was not without some foundation, as was soon learned. A few of the Onondagas declared too that they now were on the side of the "long arm" of the patriots, but the greater part of the nation was hot with anger over the destruction of their villages, and were easily won by Brant and his white emissaries to the side of the king's men.

The Cayugas and Senecas, however, were intense in their hatred of the encroaching whites; and as he moved about in their midst

Brant found a ready response to his appeals to join his great confederacy and by one determined and united uprising drive their enemies from the entire region.

In view of all these things it was decided by Washington and his leaders that the proposed expedition should be made into the very heart of the region where the strongest of the nations dwelt. If it should be found feasible, the advancing army was to be led even as far as Niagara, and the fort there, which the British held, should also be destroyed.

The command of the expedition was offered first to General Gates. The incompetent little dandy, however, wrote an insulting reply to the commander-in-chief and flatly declined the offer. Then sturdy General Sullivan was placed in command, and preparations were begun for the expedition. After considerable correspondence it was decided that two divisions should be formed,—one starting from Pennsylvania and moving up the valley of the Susquehanna to the intersection of the Tioga River, and another, called the Army of the North, was to come down the Susquehanna from its principal source and join the other division at Tioga. Of the former General Sullivan himself was to be in command, as he was

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also to be of the united armies, and of the latter General James Clinton was to be the leader. After the union of the two bodies the entire army was to advance along the course of the Chemung River into the very heart of the country of the Senecas and Cayugas, and there defeat the warriors, if they should attempt to resist, and lay waste all the region.

Of this plan Heber Otis learned soon after his return to Schenectady, and learned too that there were present labors to be done. A fleet of two hundred bateaux was to be built, upon which the men, who were to come from Albany and the surrounding country, were to be carried up the Mohawk River as far as Canajoharie. There the troops were to disembark, the flatboats were to be carried twenty miles across the country to the head of Otsego Lake, where the soldiers were again to embark, and the division was then to proceed to the appointed place, where the two armies were to be united. At the same time a larger force of men was to be stationed at Fort Schuyler, not only to protect that place, but also to be ready for any emergency that might arise. It was confidently expected, too, that many of the Oneida warriors, as well as some from the Onondagas, would march across the country

and join General Clinton's little army of fifteen hundred men when it should turn southward to effect the juncture with General Sullivan.

When at last, early in June, 1779, Clinton's men embarked on the two hundred bateaux at Schenectady and began the ascent of the Mohawk, there were few in the force more eager or excited than Heber. If the Six Nations could be subdued, — and who doubted the success of the expedition? — then it would soon be possible for the Otis family, as well as for many others, to return to their home and again live in comparative safety. The chief drawback in Heber's eagerness was the fact that not a word had been heard from his friend Timothy Murphy. Whether the rifleman had been one of those assigned to Fort Schuyler, or whether he was later to join the expedition, Heber was unable to learn.

As a great number of horses were to be used in transporting the bateaux from Canajoharie across the intervening country to the head waters of Otsego Lake (four horses for each boat), and as only a small proportion of the animals were to be carried up the Mohawk, it became necessary for a considerable number of men to be assigned to the task of driving the horses to the place where the army was to

disembark. For this latter task the young soldier was selected along with others of the men ; nor did Heber regret the selection. It was much easier to ride horseback than to be one of those to pole the clumsy craft against the swiftly flowing river, and when he rode forth from Schenectady his heart was by no means heavy.

For a time the very novelty of the experience was sufficient of itself to demand all his attention. The beautiful morning in June, the presence of such a body of men and horses, the calls of the leaders, the attempts to break away which some of the horses were continually making, were all interesting ; and when two hours had elapsed and the entire body halted to permit the horses to drink from a swiftly flowing brook by the roadside it was almost with a start of surprise that Heber became aware that the place of the halt was directly in front of the home of Susan Randall. He glanced up the lane at the rough little house, and somewhat bitterly recalled the last visit he had made there. Even while he was looking he perceived some of the children come forth from the house and in surprise run swiftly down the lane to the place where the men had halted, where

they stopped and stood staring in evident curiosity at the sight before them.

It was not long before one lad perceived Heber, and running eagerly to his side exclaimed, "Heber! Heber! Susan wants to see you."

A laugh arose from the men who heard the announcement, and in some confusion Heber said to the boy, "What does she want?"

"I don't know. I heard her say this morning she wished you were here."

"You must n't disappoint Susan, Heber," laughed one of his comrades. "You must go right up to the house."

"There won't be time," said Heber quickly.

"Oh, yes, there will. I'll stay right here and wait for you. We shan't go on for ten minutes yet. Go ahead, Heber. I'll call you in plenty of time."

Moved by an impulse which he scarcely could account for, Heber hastily dismounted and tossing the bridle to his friend at once ran toward the house. As he drew near he discovered Susan in the doorway, and to the young soldier it seemed as if the girl had turned hastily away as she perceived who the visitor was. Almost regretting that he had

come, before Heber could turn back the girl herself hailed him and said eagerly, "Come in, Heber! Come right in. I am glad to see you."

The welcome was so warm and unexpected that the young soldier no longer hesitated, but at once entered the house. To his surprise he beheld a man seated in the room, and Heber's quick glance at him convinced him that he had seen him before, though he was unable to determine where.

"Good bunch of horses," said the stranger. "They'll all be needed at Canajoharie."

"Yes," replied Heber, surprised at the knowledge of the man and still more puzzled by his voice, which sounded strangely familiar. He was not able to recall when or where he had heard it, however, and his confusion increased.

"Hungry, Heber?" laughed Susan.

"Not a bit."

"Where are you going?"

"This man says we are going to Canajoharie."

"So you are," said the man quickly. "And so am I. I know a good many more that are to meet us there, too."

It was true that the order had been given for many of the men in the adjacent region to assemble at the place where the army was to

disembark, as Heber well knew, but it was strange that one of the number should be found at the home of the Randalls. Yet in a moment Heber laughed as he recalled the fact that the man was doing no more than he himself was, and perhaps was no more to be suspected, in spite of the face and voice which still perplexed him.

"Heber, will you give me that letter?" demanded Susan suddenly.

"What letter?"

"You know what I mean."

"Yes, if you want it." As he spoke Heber held forth the discolored letter which he had found in the home of the Tory Service.

"Thank you," said Susan warmly.

"I don't know whether I can say you are welcome or not."

"Some time I'll explain," began Susan eagerly. She stopped abruptly as there came a loud call from the road, and Heber at the sound stepped quickly to the door.

CHAPTER XXIV

CUT OFF

"I MUST go," said Heber quickly, as the call was repeated. "The men are ready to start. Good-by," he added as he turned hastily to Susan.

"Hold on, I'm with you," exclaimed the stranger in the room. "I might as well report here as to wait till the men are all together at Canajoharie."

For a moment Heber stared at the stranger and did not speak, and his suspicions returned in full force. Where was it that he had seen the man? And his voice, that sounded so strangely familiar—where had he heard it before? There was no opportunity for delay now, however, and with the questions still unanswered Heber and the man at once departed from the house.

"Hello!" called Heber's companion as the two men approached the place where he was waiting with his horses. "Got a recruit, have you?"

"Yes," replied Heber quietly. "This man

says he is on the way to Canajoharie to join our force."

"That's right," laughed the man good-naturedly. "It's easier riding than it is walking, and if you don't mind I'll just try the back of one of these horses."

Without waiting for any invitation the man at once mounted one of the horses, an example which Heber and his companion quickly followed, and as they gathered up the ropes by which the animals were led, Heber's friend glanced questioningly at the young soldier, but received only a slight shake of the head in response to his implied query.

The stranger, however, manifestly was at his ease, and as the procession moved forward over the rough roadway it was plain that he was in high spirits. There were about twenty horses in the little division that had been intrusted to the care of Heber and his friend, and the addition of a third man made the task much lighter.

"When we get into the woods we'll find a bit more to do than we have now," suggested the stranger lightly. "If what I hear is straight, there will be plenty of Brant's men, and Butler's, too, to try to stop us."

"We'll have more than they can get

together," said Heber's companion quickly. "There are fifteen hundred with General Clinton alone."

"Is it so?" laughed the stranger.

"Yes, sir, and when Sullivan's division joins ours —"

"You mean when you — when we —" the man hastily corrected himself — "when we join him, we'll have twice as many?"

"That's it!"

"There's trouble among Sullivan's men, I hear."

"'Trouble?' What trouble? I have n't heard of any."

"That may be so without altering the case. In the first place there's trouble because Gates would n't take the command, and then, there's trouble because this man Sullivan wanted so many things for his comfort on the march that even Washington does n't like it. He does n't believe in loading up with a lot of baggage and fine things, when there's to be a march through the wilderness. He learned a thing or two when Braddock was cut to pieces."

"I don't know where you got your information," said Heber's companion soberly, "but wherever you got it I don't believe it's correct."

"That's your privilege, to believe what you choose," laughed the man lightly. "For my part, though, that is n't the worst thing I fear."

"What's that?"

"I'm afraid we'll never get to the head of Otsego Lake."

"Why not?"

"Because every man, woman, and child in the Mohawk Valley knows all about this expedition. And whatever else Walter Butler and Joe Brant may be they are not fools. You don't suppose they'll sit down and do nothing but let these two armies come quietly together, do you?"

"You don't believe they'll dare attack us, do you?"

"Don't you think they would find it easier to strike one army than to wait till the two armies come together? What would you do if you were in their places?"

"There may be something in that," said Heber's friend, plainly made anxious by the suggestions of the stranger. "I hadn't thought of it in that way. But," he added more cheerfully, "Clinton has probably thought of all these things, and he'll be ready to meet the rascals if they try to come too near us."

"That's so. Jim Clinton has probably thought it all out. That's the way he and his brother did year before last at Fort Putnam."¹

"What did you say your name was?" suddenly demanded Heber, who up to this time had taken no part in the conversation.

"I did n't say," laughed the stranger.

"What is it?" persisted Heber.

"It might be Brown, it might be Thorne, and it might be Newberry. Who knows?"

Heber started as the last name was suggested, for except George Cuck there was no Tory in the region more detested than was the man Newberry. He was feared far more than George Cuck, too, for he was a leader, and his deeds had been reported throughout the Mohawk Valley, while George Cuck was, as Heber declared, "as bad as he knew how to be, and the only thing that held him back from being worse was that he did not have brains enough to know how." His suspicion of the uninvited stranger became stronger, and he regretted that his friend was talking so freely of the plans and movements of the army. It was true, as the stranger himself had suggested, that reports were common of the proposed purpose of the

¹ See *The Rider of the Black Horse*.

expedition, but it seemed to the young soldier that the man was trying to induce his friend to tell all that he knew.

"If your name is Newberry you'll find a warm welcome," suggested Heber.

"Did you ever see the man?" laughed the stranger.

"No, I can't say that I did. Did you?"

"Many a time. I've been taken for him myself. So when you look at me, you can just see how Newberry looks, and when you do find him you won't make any mistake. I should n't be a bit surprised if you did see him, and pretty soon, too, for I've heard it reported that he and some of Butler's Greens and the Onondagas are going to hang on our flanks and do all they can to hinder the march. If they try real hard they may be able to do something, too."

The man spoke banteringly, but the effect of his words was disquieting both to Heber and his companion. The latter said quickly, "We're getting behind the men ahead of us. Let's start up a bit."

For the first time Heber became aware that they had indeed fallen back and were doubtless far in the rear of their friends. There was no one behind them, either, and

for a moment Heber glanced uneasily about him.

"A good suggestion," remarked the stranger, as he slapped the neck of the horse he was riding.

"Come ahead," called Heber's friend, as he pulled upon the ropes in his hands, and at the same time urged his own horse forward.

The three men were now approaching a bend in the road. On one side was the river, and on the opposite side a rocky cliff sloped back into the side of a high hill. Nothing could be seen of their companions, who were hidden from sight by the intervening hill with its great rocks and trees. For a moment a feeling of fear swept upon Heber, and he watched the stranger keenly as the entire band at a swifter pace approached the bend before them.

Suddenly, directly in the road before them, a half-dozen men appeared. There was not a word spoken, but Heber instantly was aware from the appearance of the men that they were not members of the force to whom had been intrusted the care of the horses. Apparently, too, the stranger was startled by the sight of the band, for an expression of anger or alarm appeared for a moment on his face.

"Look back there! See that, will you!" suddenly exclaimed Heber's companion, and as the young soldier glanced quickly behind him he perceived another body of six or eight men that had advanced into the road and taken a position there. Instantly the scheme became clear to Heber. The men were Tories and had been hiding while the main body passed. Then as the last division approached they had darted into the road, some in front of the horses and some in the rear, and between them were the three men. The plan was evidently to capture the men and seize the horses, and as the men in advance would not be aware of what had befallen their tardy companions, the trap could be easily sprung without alarming the main body.

"They have caught us," exclaimed the stranger in a low voice. "There is no use in trying to put up a fight."

Without replying, Heber suddenly drew the switch which he was carrying and struck the horse which the stranger was riding a savage blow, at the same time shouting and calling to his friend to follow his example. The stranger's horse instantly reared as it felt the unexpected stroke, and before the rider could control it he had been unseated and thrown to the ground.

The entire band of horses was now rearing and plunging, and in a moment darted forward at full speed. The six men before them instantly began to approach, and although they did not shout they waved their arms and shook their rifles in such a manner that the confusion of the frightened beasts increased. The horses were rearing and plunging, and then began to back. Directly behind them the other men now began to advance, waving sticks and rifles and adding to the terror of the animals. Heber, intensely excited now, was doing his utmost to keep his hold upon the ropes by which the horses were led, and at the same time retain his control of the horse upon which he was seated.

Every moment he expected to hear the report of the guns in the hands of the men, but for some reason no one fired. One of the men ran to the head of the horse which Heber was riding and endeavored to seize it by the bits, but as he lifted his hands the young soldier smote him savagely with the switch. At the same time his horse broke from the road and begun to leap over the rocks on the incline, below which was the river. Unable to control the animal, Heber tried to retain his grasp on the ropes and compel the

horses he had been leading to follow him. The scene was one of terrifying confusion. What had become of the stranger who had been thrown he was unable to perceive. The horses were mad with terror and were plunging and rearing as the men pressed upon them. Not one of the attacking party had fired nor had one of them raised his voice. It was evident that if the seizure could be made without alarming the party in advance it was the intention of the men to do so.

Heber became aware, as his own horse plunged down the steep and rocky bank, that his companion's horse had also started in the same direction, and that the entire body was following. Suddenly the young soldier was almost yanked from his seat as the ropes became tangled amidst the thickets and trees, and to save himself he let go. The action had increased the terror of his own horse, and Heber instantly devoted his entire attention to the struggling beast. The horse reared, then leaped once more directly downward. Bounding over the rocks, trees and branches scraping the face and body of his rider, the frantic animal with a bound plunged into the cold waters of the Mohawk. Without hesitating an instant Heber urged the horse forward. The

water for a slight distance from the shore was shallow, and the bottom was rough and rocky. Once the horse stumbled and nearly fell, but in a moment regained its foothold and leaped forward.

One quick glance behind him showed Heber that his friend also had gained the shore and was about to follow him into the river, but close behind he also perceived the stranger and several other men who had leaped upon the backs of horses and were in pursuit. They, too, did not hesitate, and urged the horses they were riding directly into the river.

The Mohawk at this place had spread out, and the banks were farther apart than in the most of its course. As Heber peered eagerly at the shore before him and then looked hastily back at his pursuers, the possibility that he might escape was not slight, but his friend was only a few yards in advance of four men that were doggedly following him. Why no one had fired seemed a mystery, but save for his own call and the whinny of the frightened horses scarcely a sound had been heard. Bitterly Heber regretted that he had not insisted upon bringing his own rifle, which he had intrusted to the men in the bateaux when the expedition had started from Schenectady, for

it had been assumed that few guns would be needed by those who were leading the horses to Canajoharie, and besides their entire attention would be required in keeping the horses together.

As Heber's horse gained the channel it at once began to swim, and to assist in the flight the young soldier slipped from his seat, and clinging to the horse's tail with one hand, he also began to swim. Behind him he could see that the pursuers were gaining upon his friend, and now were not more than two yards in his rear. The man was certain to be overtaken, Heber was convinced, and at the thought he spoke sharply to his own horse, urging him into a more violent effort to escape.


Suddenly a loud call from down the stream caused Heber to glance in that direction, and just coming around the bend in the Mohawk he beheld two of the bateaux. The sight at the moment was a thrilling one, and the young soldier instantly responded to the hail and shouted in his loudest tones.

CHAPTER XXV

GUARDING THE GUARDS

THE movements of the two flatboats quickly made it evident that the soldiers were aware of trouble in advance of them, and as one boat was swiftly pulled nearer one shore its companion was sent with equal speed toward the shallow waters nearer the opposite bank. At the same time both flatboats were sent rapidly forward, and almost before the men who were in pursuit of Heber and his companion were aware of the peril that was threatening them, their return to the shore was cut off by the intervention of their enemies. To attempt to gain the bank before them was equally impossible, for already one of the boats had gained a position between the desperate men and the land on that side.

For a brief time the men struggled frantically, abandoning their horses and seeking to gain the shore before they could be intercepted. The effort was vain, however, and, covered as they were by the guns of the soldiers, the uselessness of further effort was



so apparent that the four men abandoned the attempt, and standing in the water which came above their waists they quietly awaited the approach of the boat, and as soon as it drew nearer obediently clambered on board in response to the demand of the lieutenant in charge.

Meanwhile Heber had gained a position where he was enabled to stand, and, holding his horse by the bridle, he loudly explained the cause of the excitement. At his suggestion both boats now were driven swiftly to the shore from which the flight had been made, and leaving a small guard to secure the prisoners and the horses, the men leaped ashore and started in pursuit of the remaining horses and the men who had been left in charge of them.

A half-hour passed before all the horses had been secured, and when the soldiers returned to the flatboat their astonishment was as great as that of Heber to learn that one of the four men who had been taken was Newberry, the most feared and detested Tory of the immediate region. As this man proved to be the very one that had joined the young soldier and his companion at the time when the halt had been made in the road in

front of Susan Randall's house, Heber's confusion naturally was increased. Not only was the boldness of the Tory in joining the men, and even in declaring his own name, when he referred to the names by which he might be called, marvelous, but the fact that he had been just before that time in the Randall home also was not one to console the young soldier. The evident plot, too, whereby it had been planned for his friends to appear at the bend in the road and attempt to cut off one of the divisions, was one that increased Heber's anger, despite the failure of the trick ; and when at last the word was given for the boats to proceed and for Heber and his companion to resume the charge of the horses, the young soldier's mind was in a condition of confusion. There was no opportunity afforded, however, for explanations, and in a brief time the advance was resumed.

No further adventure befell the party before its arrival at Canajoharie, and as soon as the following morning appeared the word was at once given that the transportation of the bateaux across the twenty miles of land that intervened between the meeting-place and Otsego Lake should be begun. Heber was unable to learn what had been decided concerning the fate

of the captured Tory and his comrades, for he was at once ordered to report to a division which was to be stationed at a place on the route where the bateaux were to pass. Indeed, at regular intervals all along the line of advance, bands of soldiers were to be posted, and flanking parties and scouts also were to scour the adjacent forests to discover the approach of their enemies, if the Tories and their Indian allies should attempt to interfere with the progress of the men and boats.

The sun was just above the eastern horizon when Heber reported to the band of which he was to be a member, and great was his surprise when he perceived Timothy Murphy in the number.

"Ach, th' top o' th' marnin' t' yez, Heber!" exclaimed the Irishman delightedly, as he discovered his friend. "'T is glad Oi am t' see yez once more!"

"When did you come, Tim? Where have you been all the time? I did n't know but you were lost," said Heber as soon as he had greeted the rifleman.

"Lost, is it? No, me bye! Oi've been that busy at Fort Schuyler —"

"Is that where you were, Tim?"

"Sure! Where else could Oi be?"

"Looking for George Cuck."

"Bad luck t' th' loikes o' th' rascal," exclaimed Timothy warmly.

"That's it! That's it!" said Heber suddenly. "I've been trying to think where it was that I saw Newberry. He was the man that met George Cuck when I was hidden there by the bank. I knew I had seen him before, but I could n't just tell where it was."

"Is it crazy yez arre, Haber?" demanded Timothy, as he gazed in astonishment at his friend.

"No. No. Not a bit. But we captured Newberry, the Tory, back here, and I have been trying to think where I had seen him before."

"Yez 'll niver see him again, Haber, lad."

"Not see him? Why not, I'd like to know?"

"Because he's been sint a long way from th' Mohawk, I dunno."

"What do you mean, Tim?"

"He's been ilevated."

"I don't understand."

"Listen t' th' lad, will yez. Well thin, th' Toory was hanged this marnin'."

"Hanged? Newberry hanged?" demanded Heber aghast.

"Thot's it. He an' a friend o' his named Hare. They were both iledated about a yard. 'T was a rope what did it."

"Are you sure?"

"'Sure'? I saw it wid me two oyes."

The word to advance was now given, and no opportunity for further greeting was to be had, but as Heber marched beside Timothy his thoughts were more of the fate of the man whom he had seen in Susan Randall's house than of the twenty-five men in whose company he was marching.

For nearly two hours the advance was continued, and then the word to halt was given, for the little band had arrived at the position where they were to remain on guard until the entire two hundred bateaux had passed. There was no attempt made at strict discipline, the men being only forbidden to depart from the place and charged to keep well together. Within the sound of a rifle-shot in either direction other similar bands had been posted, and in case of an attack upon any part of the line it was confidently believed that the entire force of soldiers could be speedily and easily summoned.

Here there was an opportunity for Heber to renew his conversation with Timothy, and

in response to his inquiries he learned that a speedy trial had been given Newberry, the Tory, and that he had been sentenced and hanged as a spy. Lieutenant Hare had also met a similar fate, for he had been one of the men in the company that attacked the rear division of the men who were leading the horses from Schenectady to Canajoharie.

In spite of his feeling that the punishment had been severe, perhaps unduly so, Heber soon was listening to the tale which Timothy had to relate. For two days the Irishman had remained in the home of the settler where Heber had last seen him, and then, after he had done all in his power for the stricken family, he had rejoined Joe Elerson, and the two riflemen had pushed forward to Cherry Valley and thence to Fort Schuyler, where they had remained until the summons had come for them to join General Clinton's division and report at Canajoharie. There the two men had arrived the day before Heber's coming.

"Where is Joe now?" inquired Heber.

"Sure he's in th' loine somewhere."

"That's good. Joe will be needed. Hello! Here comes one of the boats."

Up the rough roadway came four horses struggling with their load of a heavily laden flatboat. The drivers were urging the toiling beasts up the hill, and soon disappeared beyond its crest. At irregular intervals the sight was followed by others of a similar kind, and throughout the day the task was continued. At nightfall the bateaux had not all been transported, and every company of the long line of guards was ordered to remain where it then was until the following day. The monotony of the long hours of waiting had been broken only once, and that was by the arrival of two young Oneida Indians, who, about an hour before sunset, suddenly emerged from the forest behind the place where Heber and Timothy were stationed. Without a word the young braves had joined the force, taking their places there as a matter of course, and at once asking for food. As both warriors were known by others than Heber and Timothy, no questions were asked of them, nor were they themselves inclined, apparently, to volunteer any information.

As darkness drew on it was decided that a single guard should be stationed on either side of the camp and within the forest. This measure was taken as a precaution more than

because of any fear of an attack, for it was not believed that any of the enemy were near, or, if they should be in the vicinity, would venture to attack a force which numbered nearly fifteen hundred men.

Upon Heber fell the task of guarding the right of the camp during the latter half of the night, and when he had been summoned and had gone to the place assigned to him, he could see that the forest was light all about him, for the moon at the time was at the full. The giant trees were so distinctly to be seen that the young guard's fear of any of his foes creeping upon him without discovery was slight. Indeed, the precaution of establishing a guard seemed scarcely worth while.

An hour of his vigil had gone when the young soldier was startled by the approach of some one advancing from the camp, but in a moment he recognized the young Oneida, Hungry Wolf, and was even more surprised when the Indian advanced noiselessly to his side and whispered,—

“Oneida help.”

“Why? Anything wrong?” inquired Heber quickly.

“Heap wrong. Oneidas see men.”

"When? Where? How many?" whispered Heber excitedly, peering keenly into the adjacent forest as he spoke.

"Two," said Hungry Wolf.

"Two men? Well, we don't need to be scared if that's all."

"More than two. Oneidas see heap men. See palefaces and Senecas. See together. See heap one time. See heap 'nother time."

"When?" demanded Heber quickly, at once comprehending that the young Oneida was telling him of two bands, each composed of white men and Indians, that he and his brother Eagle's Eye had discovered.

"Just before come."

"You mean a little while before you and your brother came to our camp?"

The Oneida by a grunt indicated that the young soldier was correct in his surmise.

"How many in each band?" demanded Heber excitedly.

"Heap lot," responded the Oneida. "Paleface so much," and Hungry Wolf opened and closed the fingers of one hand three times; "Senecas so much," and this time the fingers of both hands were opened and closed four times.

"Fifteen white men and forty Indians,"

said Heber thoughtfully. "Hungry Wolf, do you mean that there were fifty in each band?" he demanded suddenly.

The young Oneida nodded his head to imply that Heber was correct.

"How near us were they when you saw them?"

"Two mile — three mile."

By dint of further questioning, Heber learned that the two Oneidas had come from their castle, and on their way had discovered the presence of the two forces of Tories and Indians. These they had cautiously followed until the band had divided, and with about sixty in each division had, both by the increased caution they manifested and the direction in which they were moving, convinced the keen-eyed Oneidas that they were plotting something against the force which was dragging the bateaux from Canajoharie to Otsego Lake.

"Hide Sam, him there," suggested Hungry Wolf.

"General Schuyler never ought to have let him go!" said Heber warmly. "If Newberry deserved hanging, then this rascally Onondaga deserved it twice."

"Hide Sam's white man there, too."

"Who? George Cuck?" demanded Heber quickly.

"No can say George Cuck," remarked Hungry Wolf blandly. "Him there, though."

The conversation abruptly ceased, for although it had been carried on in low tones, Heber's fears were by this time so keen that he was peering all about him. The Oneida, too, was watchful, and taking a position not far from Heber he plainly was planning to share the vigil. To Heber it seemed scarcely credible that a direct attack would be made, and yet if there were two bands of the enemy each composed of fifty white men and warriors, by a bold stroke any one of the separate forces might be cut off before aid could be summoned, for few of the colonists' bands contained more than twenty-five men. At the thought the young soldier started back toward the camp. He would inform the lieutenant in command, he thought, and then the responsibility of sending word along the line would be transferred to that officer.

A sudden warning whisper from the Oneida caused Heber to stop quickly, and then Hungry Wolf stole noiselessly into the forest. For a moment the young soldier, startled by the unexpected action of his companion, stared

300 MARCHING AGAINST THE IROQUOIS

blankly at the place where the Oneida had disappeared, but in a moment the cause of it all became apparent, and Heber was running swiftly toward the camp.

CHAPTER XXVI

A FLIGHT

THE dawn had begun to appear by this time, and as Heber had glanced behind him he had seen the young Oneida in swift pursuit of an Indian that evidently had crept close to the place where the two guards had been stationed. The sight had spurred the young soldier to a renewed attempt to summon aid, for he had no thought that the one Indian whom Hungry Wolf had so quickly followed was not without companions in the vicinity. In that event Heber was fully aware of the need of aid, and he was running at his utmost speed to summon Timothy and his friends to the assistance of the Oneida.

A sharp call from the Oneida warrior caused Heber to stop abruptly, and as he glanced quickly behind him he could see that Hungry Wolf was engaged in an apparently deadly combat with the Seneca whom he had overtaken. The two men were locked, and their swaying bodies betrayed the fierce nature of the contest as well as the fact that apparently

they were the only Indians to be seen near the spot. Shouting to his friends to come to his help, Heber instantly started at his utmost speed to the aid of Hungry Wolf. Leaping over the logs and darting amidst the trees, Heber sped forward; but when he had arrived within a few yards of the contestants, whose loud breathing could be plainly heard, he was startled by the sound of men behind him, and in an instant perceived a half-dozen or more of the Senecas, with George Cuck among them, in pursuit of himself, and between the place where he then was and the camp.

Why the band had not fired upon him Heber could not understand. It was plain that they had made a trap, and by permitting the Oneida to pursue the Seneca, who had fled before him, while they themselves had remained concealed, they had succeeded in placing themselves between Hungry Wolf and his friends. It was a similar condition in which Heber also found himself, and though he bitterly regretted his own negligence, for he might well have suspected the very trick which had been so successfully employed, there was not a moment afforded for changing his plans. One glimpse of his foes had been sufficient to send him bounding into the forest, and he was

instantly aware that the band he had seen was in full pursuit. An old brushwood fence was before him, and as Heber bounded over it his foot was caught in the tangled mess and he was thrown heavily to the ground. A number of tomahawks were hurled at him as he sprang to his feet, and he became aware that one of the fingers of his right hand was nearly severed from its place. Otherwise he was unharmed, and with renewed determination he plunged into a thicket of tall weeds and bushes. Forcibly making his way through the mass, he succeeded in entering the more open woods beyond, but he was at once aware that his pursuers had gained slightly upon him by evading the weeds, and now were pressing hard upon him.

Still no cry was heard, nor had a rifle been discharged. It was clear to the swiftly running soldier that the plan of his enemies was to take him alive if possible, although for what purpose he was unable to conjecture. It might be that they hoped to obtain information from him, or perhaps they were hoping to save him for an *auto da fé*. At all events as yet he had not even been threatened by their fire, and, fleet of foot as Heber was, he now began to run still more swiftly.

For an hour or more the pursuers hung doggedly to the chase, and still had not drawn any nearer the man they were following. As Heber sped down the slope of a small hill, for the first time the pursuing party raised their rifles and fired at the running soldier, but luckily without hitting him. The sound served to increase the efforts of the young soldier, who by this time was breathing hard, and every step required an effort that cost him pain. The desperate plight in which he found himself caused Heber to look about him for some way of escape, but not one could he perceive. He recalled the stories he had heard of the methods which fugitives from the Indians had employed to deceive and shake off their enemies, but not a scheme could he think of. It was a dogged, relentless chase, and if he should pause for even a brief time for rest some of the Senecas would speedily overtake him, he was well assured.

And yet the young soldier was aware that to continue the flight long was impossible. Heavy weights seemed to be attached to his feet, and his trembling knees seemed to him almost to touch the ground as he fled forward. A moment of rest, a pause for breath, he must have, he thought, and as he

entered another hedge of tall grass and weeds he stopped, pressing his hand to his side and almost gasping.

In a moment, and directly in front of him, he heard the stealthy footstep of an Indian, and rearoused by the peril Heber drew his own rifle in front of him and endeavored to part the weeds so that he might see where to fire. At that very moment the crack of a rifle in front of him was heard, as was also the whiz of a bullet that slightly cut the young soldier's side as it passed. Almost at the same instant the report of another rifle from a different direction disclosed the thickening dangers, and Heber quickly darted forward and came almost face to face with the Indian that had first fired upon him. Hastily Heber raised his own weapon, but as he did so the Seneca fled with a yell which was the first cry of a human being that had been heard since the chase began.

As the Indian fled backward and in a moment had disappeared from sight, Heber resolved to retain his shot until it was needed even more than at the present moment, and then bounded forward as he resumed his flight. The momentary rest he had secured failed to aid him, and as the desperate young

soldier sped onward there were moments when his eyes were so blurred that it was scarcely possible for him to distinguish the objects before him. A roaring sound was all the time in his ears now, while the pain in his side had become almost unbearable.

He now found that he was climbing a low ridge, and as soon as he had gained the summit he darted swiftly down the opposite side, resolved to make one more effort to increase his speed and leave his pursuers behind him. When he had arrived in the little valley the sight of a noisy little brook there, its waters sparkling in the sunlight, which now penetrated even the depths of the forest in spots, caused him in his agony of thirst to fling himself at full length on the bank and plunge his head into the water. He drank, too, from the stream, although he was aware of the danger of such an act, but the temptation was too strong to be resisted.

As soon as he had quenched his thirst he staggered to his feet, and as he turned and glanced at the ridge over which he had just come he perceived one of the Senecas just emerging over the border. Heber endeavored to raise his rifle to his shoulder, but his hands trembled and his exhaustion was so complete

that the effort was more than he could accomplish. And yet he was aware that in a moment the exultant savage would be upon him, and his own fate would be quickly sealed.

Again he raised his rifle and steadied it against the trunk of a tree. His heart was beating furiously, and every breath was a source of pain. By one supreme effort he held the rifle still, and exerting himself to the very utmost of his strength he aimed at the Seneca and pulled the trigger. A low exclamation escaped his lips as he perceived the savage pitch forward upon his face, and then, breathless with excitement and weariness, Heber stared at the fallen warrior to see whether or not he would rise again.

In a moment it became manifest that the warrior was motionless, and then Heber tremblingly began to reload his rifle. No sooner, however, had the load been "rammed home" and the gun carefully primed than Heber saw upon the crest of the ridge the entire band of his pursuers.

A feeling of despair at the sight swept over the almost exhausted young soldier. He was partly shielded from sight by the trunk of a huge hemlock behind which he was crouching, but that only a brief moment would pass

before he would be discovered he firmly believed. There was still a shot left for one of his enemies, he grimly thought, and as he glanced at the two white men in the midst of the band of Senecas, he decided that George Cuck should be the one to receive it.

A loud wailing now arose from the pursuers, and as Heber peered cautiously out, keeping his head, as he did so, near the ground, he could see that the Indians were standing in a circle about the body of their fallen comrade, which apparently they had just discovered. Again and again the weird, mournful, penetrating cry was raised, and apparently for the moment all thoughts of the fugitive were abandoned in their grief for the dead warrior. Not even to the protests of the two white men, who were eagerly appealing to the Senecas to continue their pursuit, would they listen, although Heber well knew that in a brief time their anger at the slayer would return, and a new and fresh incentive would be added to their desires to capture him. Not a moment had he to lose, and striving to keep the huge hemlock between himself and the warriors on the crest of the low hill, Heber cautiously, carefully crept from his hiding-place, and soon gained the bank of the brook.

As yet he had not been discovered, he assured himself, and for a moment peered intently about him for some means of escape.

A little farther down the stream was a dense thicket of young hemlock trees, and Heber instantly decided to seek its refuge. Slipping over the bank of the brook, and yet contriving to keep his rifle dry, he crouched and crawled slowly toward the shelter he was seeking.

At last he succeeded in gaining the spot, and as he paused for an instant to listen, he could still hear the loud wailing of the Senecas. Evidently the warrior that had fallen was a man of some influence among them, but the thought merely served to intensify the fear in Heber's heart, for the pursuit of him would be all the more eager now on that account; and what his fate would be, if he should fall into the hands of the Senecas, his own fears plainly indicated.

Slowly he arose from the bed of the brook, and stepping carefully, so that no signs of his footsteps might be left to indicate to his pursuers that he had sought a place of refuge here, he succeeded in entering the thicket. The young trees were growing so closely together that it was only with the greatest dif-

ficulty he could make his way forward. Still his every movement was made slowly and with great care. With his hands he pulled back the branches or bent the small trees as he stepped into the midst of them, for not a trace of his presence did he plan to leave.

In this manner he had advanced into the thicket a few yards when he beheld a huge hollow trunk of a fallen forest monarch directly before him, and the sight instantly recalled the escape he had successfully made in the preceding year.¹ Still exerting all his caution, he crawled into the tempting opening and did not stop until he was convinced that he was at least halfway through the log. Then at last he ceased his efforts and lay still.

For a time even his sufferings were ignored as Heber listened almost breathlessly for sounds that might indicate the discovery of his hiding-place ; but as the moments passed and the silence was still unbroken the young soldier at last began to hope. Then, too, he became aware of the wound in his hand and the blood which was flowing from his side. His cramped position in the hollow log prevented him from assisting himself to any

¹ See *The Red Chief*.

extent, but that either wound was severe he did not believe, or he would have been made aware of it long before.

Again his fears returned as he fancied he could hear a stealthy tread near the log. Keenly alert, he listened and watched the open end of the log for the appearance of his foes. But the sound which had alarmed him was not repeated, and as the assurance deepened that thus far he had escaped, the young soldier at last fell into the sleep of exhaustion.

When he awoke he had no means of knowing how much time had elapsed, but as he could not see any light at the entrance he concluded that night had come. Still too wearied to attempt to move, and comforted by the failure of the Senecas to discover him, Heber again slept.

Daylight had returned when he awakened, but the returning light brought back his fears, and he decided that he must remain in the log until the day was gone. Tormented by thirst, his wounded hand and side now pain-
ing him severely, his cramped position and the peril which still threatened him all combined to intensify his misery; but so convinced was Heber that his chance of escape depended entirely upon his remaining where

he then was that he resolutely determined to endure his sufferings throughout the day rather than try to escape before his recent pursuers should have abandoned the chase. Sometimes dozing, sometimes suffering acutely, and at times tormented by the alarm which some sound near the log would arouse, the concealed young soldier endured the confinement throughout the day, and when darkness again appeared he was so worn out that he once more fell asleep.

When he again awoke he could see that the sun had not risen, and then, stiff and sore, he painfully and yet resolutely crawled to the exit.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ARMIES UNITE

WEAK and still suffering from thirst and hunger, Heber glanced fearfully about him as he gained a position near the end of the log within which he had been concealed. The sunlight was shining in spots amongst the trees, and the birds and squirrels were noisily chattering all about him. The young soldier remained motionless for several minutes, and then, convinced that none of his foes was in the immediate vicinity, he carefully made his way to the brook which he knew was near by, and threw himself face downward upon the bank. Not even his fears were sufficient to prevent him from drinking long of the sparkling waters, and when he at last arose he felt marvelously refreshed.

Again after a careful inspection he concluded that he was alone, and then for the first time he examined his wounds. His side had been only slightly cut by the bullet that had grazed him, but the middle finger on his left hand was gone. Carefully bathing the wound,

which before he had wrapped in a piece of linen cloth he chanced to have in his pocket, and rebinding the cloth upon his hand, he began to move forward in the direction from which he had fled. His progress was slow, and, assured that his actions were not watched, he frequently stopped to gather berries and satisfy as best he might the cravings of his hunger. In this manner he proceeded on his way, alternately stopping and then cautiously advancing, until at last he regained the place where his own company had encamped at the time when he had fled before the Senecas. Not a man, however, could he discover near the spot.

A hasty examination convinced him that the men had all gone on toward Otsego Lake, and without hesitating long Heber at once looked to the priming of his rifle and started in the direction in which his companions had proceeded. He was not able to perceive any indications that the army had been attacked, and as he moved forward a measure of confidence returned to the wearied young soldier. He even ventured to bring one of the numerous squirrels to the ground by a stone, and, hastily kindling a fire, ate ravenously of the food which in this manner he had secured.

Refreshed by his repast, he resumed his journey in better spirits, and when four hours had elapsed he was rejoiced as he became aware that he was at the end of his lonely march. Not once had he perceived any signs that the Indians were near, and his confidence now was almost completely restored.

He was halted by the guard, but a brief explanation of his predicament quickly obtained an entrance within the lines, and he had not proceeded far before, to his delight, he beheld his friend Timothy Murphy before him. For a moment the Irishman stared blankly at the young soldier, and then rushing upon him exclaimed delightedly:—

“Faith, an’ ’t is me bye! An’ where is it yez have been, I dunno?”

In a few words Heber related what had befallen him, Timothy listening eagerly to all that was said, and then exclaiming:—

“Sure, it’s lucky’t was n’t yer head what was hit. Coome right along wid me, lad, an’ we’ll have th’ surgeon fix yez all right. It’s meself what knows jist what’s th’ matther. An’ Oi’m thinkin’ ther’ll be plinty o’ toime for yez to git risted, me bye, before iver we catch up wid Sullivan.”

As Heber obediently accompanied the rifle-

man in his search for the surgeon, Timothy in turn related what had occurred in the army during his friend's absence. The alarm which had been aroused by the flight of Heber and the young Oneida had for a time caused no slight confusion among the men.

An effort at pursuit had been made, but the attempt had speedily been abandoned, and the belief had been general that the young sentry had either been made a prisoner or had met a fate even worse.

"An' th' Oneida is worse 'n George Cuck," remarked Timothy.

"What? Hungry Wolf? You don't mean to tell me —"

"Indade, an' Oi do, lad! Eagle's Eye is wid us iv'ry day in th' wake, but his brother is a traitor, bad luck t' th' loikes o' him!"

"How do you know?"

"Sure an' Oi'm not tellin' iverything Oi know. But, lad, 't was that same Oneida what led th' party roight t' th' place where yez were. An' maybe George Cuck, had it all fixed up wid him, I dunno. There's special rayson for belavin' th' traitor would be ather loikin' much t' get yez, Oi'm thinkin'."

They had arrived at the surgeon's quarters by this time, and no opportunity was afforded

for further explanations. Puzzled by the assertions Timothy had made, Heber somehow was convinced that the rifleman had spoken from information which was doubtless accurate, although it was difficult for him to understand how he had obtained it. The immediate problem, however, of caring for his own wounds and providing for his own wants was too pressing to permit any delay, and for an hour he remained with the surgeon.

When he departed, Timothy, who had not been able to remain with his friend, was nowhere to be seen, and Heber at once sought out the company to which he belonged, where his return and the tale of his adventures were alike warmly greeted.

It was not long before Heber learned that the Irishman's prophecy had not been an idle one when he had declared that there would be ample time afforded at the camp beside Otsego Lake in which to recover from wounds and weariness. For some reason which Heber was unable to learn, the delay was prolonged. Day followed day, and the only word received was that General Sullivan had not as yet arrived at the meeting-place. What the cause of the delay was no one appeared to

understand, and as the days passed into weeks the impatience of the men increased.

General Clinton, however, was not idle, nor did he suffer his men to remain in idleness. A project had been entered upon which not only provided the impatient soldiers with something to do, but also in the end aided in the success of the expedition. Across the waters at the head of the lake the general had ordered a dam to be made, and as soon as this task had been accomplished its effect became at once evident. Steadily the waters of the little lake and its outlet rose, until the nearby lands had all been submerged. At Oghkwaga, where on the level meadows the few Indian inhabitants had promising crops of beans and corn, the rising flood not only destroyed all the plantations, but also terrified the red men by its sudden and unexpected appearance. Never before had their oldest chieftains heard of the waters rising at such a time, and to such an extent, and in their alarm they were ready to believe that the Great Spirit was angry with his children, and was punishing them for the part they had been taking against the palefaces.

The alarm of the scattered Indians dwelling in the vicinity was increased when a huge

flotilla of more than two hundred bateaux appeared upon the flood, every boat filled with armed warriors of the white men. Never had the simple-hearted dwellers seen a larger craft upon the beautiful lake than one of their own birch-bark canoes, and naturally the sight of the strange fleet was appalling.

And at last General Clinton's force had indeed embarked and started for the place where General Sullivan's army was to be met. July had passed before word had been received that Sullivan was advancing, having left Wyoming on the last day of July. He was now moving up the Susquehanna to Tioga, where the armies were to unite.

On the ninth of August¹ the welcome order was given to embark, and the high waters not only enabled the flotilla to pass safely down the lake, but also assisted much when the fleet passed into the river. At Oghkwaga an additional force had joined Clinton's division, and when at last the junction between the two armies was made General Sullivan found himself in command of five thousand men.

Opposed to him was a body of fifteen hundred Indian warriors, including the two hundred or more of British regulars and rangers

¹ 1779.

who were led by John Butler. With the Tory leader also were Sir John and Guy Johnson, Walter Butler, and Captain M'Donald,—every man known and hated by the patriots of the Mohawk Valley, who had become only too familiar with their deeds of cruelty and their relentless hatred of their former neighbors.

Joseph Brant was in command of the combined Indian forces, and his qualifications for leadership were so well known that, despite their own superior numbers, the advancing American army well understood that its task was no easy one. And yet there was scarcely a man in the army who did not know from sad personal experience the necessity of some action being taken that should make the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, and their allies realize that their attacks upon the settlers and their aid for the forces of King George must cease. Many of the soldiers themselves had lost kindred in the massacres at Wyoming, at Cherry Valley, and other places, and it was more than a desire for revenge that was now leading them on. The savage warriors must be taught not only a respect for the colonial troops, but must also learn that their own cruel deeds must cease. The apparent cruelty in the purpose of the advance of Sul-

livan's army was only to find relief and release from cruelties greater still.

Heber Otis, who by this time had entirely recovered from his recent experiences, was among the most eager of the men in Sullivan's army. It was the first time he ever had seen so many men in one body, and his feeling of confidence in the leader's ability was almost as great as his interest in the expedition itself.

It was not long before the army began to move, now following the course of the Chemung River. A strong force of light infantry proceeded in advance of the main body, and large flanking parties were daily assigned for the purpose of protecting the men from a sudden attack from either side.

It was currently reported among the men that the first place to be attacked was the strong Indian defenses at Newtown,¹ and that when these had been destroyed the army would proceed through the Genesee country, perhaps even as far west as Niagara itself. Heber was in high spirits, for to him it seemed as if success must crown the invasion, and with the Indians once thoroughly cowed, if not subdued, it would be safe for the people that had fled from Cherry Valley at the time of

¹ The site of the present city of Elmira, New York.

the massacre there to return to their homes. And though the young soldier was by no means unmindful of the greater effect that it was desired to produce on the redcoats by punishing their savage allies, nevertheless his own somewhat selfish interest was not unlike that felt by many of his comrades, whose eagerness to be restored to their families made them desirous that measures be taken to protect the lonely homes of the settlers.

On the evening of August 28, Timothy had, for the first time since the combined armies had advanced, stretched himself by Heber's side. The Irishman had shared in the destruction of an Indian village that day, and was telling his young companion of the fields of corn that had been burned. Of the warriors themselves nothing had been seen.

"What does that mean?" inquired Heber. "Have they all run away?"

"They have not," replied Timothy. "We'll be afther foindin' 'em in the marnin', I dunno. They're somewhere, an' they're all togither, Oi'm thinkin', an' Gin'ral Sullivan, by firin' a cannon iv'ry mornin' an' iv'ry avenin', is jist tellin' 'em t' be on th' lookout for us."

"You don't think we ought to have a sunset and sunrise gun, then?"

" Oi do not."

" Tim, I thought you said the Sullivans were once kings of Ireland."

" An' so they were."

" Doesn't a king of Ireland know better than to give his enemies word of his coming, when he is marching against them?"

" Sure, an' he does. It's not Gin'ral Sullivan what Oi'm blamin' so much as some o' th' men."

" Did n't you say, Tim, that the Murphys were once kings in Ireland, too?"

" Faith, an' Oi did thot."

" Were the Murphys kings before or after the Sullivans?"

" Sure an' Oi can't jist say. It's before, Oi'm thinkin'."

" Then the Sullivans were too strong for the Murphys, is that it?"

" It is not," retorted Timothy warmly. " One Murphy is a match for any two Sullivans what iver stepped foot on the sod o'ould Oireland."

" You ought to be the general in command here then, Tim."

" Sure, an' Oi know it. If me sarvices wid me roifle were not naded t' pick off th' haythen savages, Oi'd be afther tellin' Gin'ral Washington he'd made a mistake."

“Tim, do you believe George Cuck is with Butler and those Indians?”

“Faith, an’ Oi do thot.”

“And Hide Sam?”

“He’s th’ shadow o’ George Cuck, an’ in coorse he’ll be here. An’ if we foind th’ two o’ thim we’ll trate ’em to the same rope what Newberry was hanged wid.”

Heber did not respond, but long after Timothy had fallen asleep he was thinking of the possibility of the young Tory being found in the force of combined Indians and white men that was said to be near.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ADVANCE

ON the following morning the first man whom Heber greeted was Miles Sprague. It had been long since the young soldiers had met, and Heber smiled, as despite the genuine cordiality of his friend the air of condescension which Miles had assumed in their former interviews once more became pronounced.

"Well, my young friend, are you ready for the attack?" inquired Miles graciously.

"When is it to be made?" responded Heber quietly.

"At almost any time now. I'm expecting the rangers to give a bit of a show to the fight the redskins will make, but we'll drive 'em out. They can't stand long before us."

"I'm sure I hope they won't."

"Don't be frightened, Heber. We'll drive the whole crowd of them out in no time."

"I'm glad of that."

"Not a question about it, lad," said Miles warmly. "I wish I could be with you, but I have to be out on the left wing. If you

keep cool I don't think you'll have any trouble."

"I expect to be busy. I shall have to protect Timothy Murphy, you see."

"Is Tim with you?" demanded Miles quickly.

"Yes."

"Well, then, you'll be protected better than you would be if I was near you."

"Tim is a good man. He'll do his best."

"Of course he will. Keep up your courage, lad, that's half the battle, you know."

As Miles turned away Heber smiled as he watched the pompous young soldier, and yet the seriousness of the task before him did not permit him long to think of other matters than the engagement which the army believed was soon to come. Nor were the men deceived, for about eleven o'clock¹ word came from Major Parr, who was leading the advance guard, that the position which the Indians and their Tory allies had taken had been discovered, and that the time for an attack upon their stronghold had arrived.

A breastwork a half-mile in length had been constructed by the red men and their Tory allies in such a manner that a great part of it

¹ August 29, 1779.

was protected by a bend in the river, and only the front and one of the flanks were exposed to an attack by Sullivan's army. Even the exposed flank was in a measure also protected by a ridge of land that made approach difficult, and exposed the men who might gain its crest to the fire of the red men concealed behind the earthworks. The ground in the vicinity was covered with pine trees, amongst which low scrub-oaks also were growing. The wily Indians had cut quantities of these low oaks and transplanted them in the ground in front of their defenses, doubtless in the hope of concealing the earthworks from the sight of their enemies.

The rough roadway, which Brant believed Sullivan's men would follow, led to a position parallel to the earthworks, and the Indians were confident the entire line of the approaching army would in this way be exposed to their own fire, and they were hopeful of repeating the destruction they had accomplished two years before this time, when General Herkimer's followers had been led into the ravine at Oriskany.

Major Parr, however, had made certain of the location and defenses of the enemy when his own men were at a distance of four hun-

dred yards from the breastworks, and without exposing his men had hastily sent word back to General Sullivan to come to his aid. The commander promptly responded to the appeal, and the entire force, carefully arranged and in good spirits, advanced.

Before their arrival, however, the action had begun. Little bands of Indians would rush forth from their works, and with wild yells draw near the waiting soldiers, discharge their guns, and then with still wilder cries retreat to the earthworks, hoping in this manner to induce some of their enemies to pursue them. Major Parr, although he returned the fire of the warriors, was too well skilled in Indian ways to permit his men to follow the retreating savages.

From the cries of the warriors it almost seemed to the waiting men that the entire adjacent forest must be filled with the hostile tribes; but the anxiety was speedily relieved when Sullivan and his men appeared upon the scene. The commander after a brief inspection decided that the hill to his right was doubtless also occupied by the red warriors, who were hoping to remain hidden until their unsuspecting enemies should pass, when they would fall upon their foes in the rear, while

at the same time their own comrades would rush from the defenses and attack the advancing force in front and on the flank.

General Sullivan was not to be so easily caught, however, and at once ordered General Poor's brigade to wheel off and attempt to gain the left flank and surround the warriors, whom he believed to be hidden on the hillside, while at the same time his own division was to attack them in front.

Poor's men at once advanced toward the hillside, and instantly it became manifest that General Sullivan's conjecture had been correct, for the hill seemed to be swarming with the red-skinned warriors, and the contest for the possession of the place became fierce. The cannon, which had been dragged forward, now began to batter at the earthworks, and from the hillside, the defenses, and the adjacent forests the wild warcries of the Indians were loud and continued.

For two hours the cannon battered the earthworks and the contest became steadily fiercer. Every rock, every tree or bush seemed to be a hiding-place of the determined warriors, and the fact that so few were seen to fall was a cause of surprise to the attacking forces. Brant himself seemed to be every-

where. He rushed about among his men, encouraging one, reproving another, giving fresh directions, and continually cheering his followers. The Tories and rangers, too, were fighting desperately. It was here, if anywhere, that the advance of Sullivan's forces was to be checked, and there was no question as to the bravery of the white allies of the Six Nations.

The Indians yielded their ground literally only inch by inch. Driven from the shelter of one tree, a warrior would leap to that of another, his agility as great as that of a panther, and time and again the red warrior would make use of his bayonet in attempting to defend himself, — something almost unknown in all the annals of Indian warfare.

The cannonade now became so loud and continuous that the weird cries of the red men, which previously had almost drowned the reports of the muskets and rifles, now seemed to be silenced. The severest fighting was that of Poor's force on the hillside, for there Brant had rushed as soon as he became aware of the peril that would follow the loss of the place. The rangers and Tories also had hastened to aid in defending the hill. But Poor and his followers were as determined as the enemy.

Steadily the men forced their way up the hillside, every man being compelled to defend himself and at the same time watch for the appearance of a form from behind some sheltering tree. At last the division gained the crest of the hill, and as it began to turn the flank of the men who were stationed there, the loud retreat halloo was sounded, and the Indians, as well as the Tories and rangers, fled from the place. Scalping-knives, tomahawks, and packs were abandoned in the mad flight, and eleven of the dead were found on the field. All the others that had fallen were either borne away by the warriors or their bodies were cast into the river.

For two miles Sullivan's army continued the pursuit of the fleeing defenders, and all along the way abundant evidences were found of the losses the Indians had suffered. At last, when the Indians no longer attempted to keep together, but broke into small parties and fled in different directions, the pursuit was abandoned, and the army, first setting fire to all the huts they could find and burning the growing crops, returned to the field of battle and there encamped for the night.

Long and fiercely as the battle had raged, the number of the fallen in Sullivan's army

was found to be only a half-dozen, and the wounded numbered only about fifty. When the morning dawned, the wounded, together with many of the cannon which could not be transported through the dense forests, were sent under the protection of a detachment back to Tioga. Then, too, it was discovered that the supply of food which had been provided for the army was inadequate, and the men were at once placed upon short rations. Not a man, however, was heard to complain, for nearly every one had special reasons for desiring the success of the expedition which had been begun, and was not only willing but eager to do his utmost, since success meant relief for the colonists from attacks by the Indians, and would afford a measure of safety as well for the families of the scattered settlers.

On the thirty-first of August the army of Sullivan resumed its advance, following the course of the winding streams, burning or destroying every hut or growing crop they could find as they proceeded. One village of twenty houses, and another containing not so many, were burned to the ground, and numerous fields of corn were set on fire.

The army passed through several long and

narrow defiles among the hills, and the fear of an attack in each place was keen; but for some reason the enterprise of Brant and the intelligence of Butler seemed to be at fault. Why they retreated as they did is not understood even yet, for if they had followed the advancing army there were many occasions when they might have inflicted great damage, even if they could not have destroyed the force.

A deep-tangled hemlock swamp was entered by Sullivan, against the advice of his more experienced comrades, and plunging through the morass, sinking deeply into the mud, the men became so wearied that soon the order was given for the army to halt for the night in the depths where they then were. Had Brant led his warriors then into the dense morass, there is no question that he would have taken his enemy at a great disadvantage.

However, neither Brant nor Butler displayed his usual sagacity, and the army of Sullivan, as soon as morning came, safely made their way out of the swamp and proceeded toward Catherinestown, where the orchards and corn-fields, as well as the houses, were completely destroyed.

General Clinton's division, in which were

both Heber and his friend Timothy, had been marching in the rear, and only regained the main body when the army arrived at Catherinestown. The complications in which General Sullivan found himself involved were increased now by the arrival of Oneigat, an Oneida runner, with a message from his people explaining why they had failed to send the warriors they had promised, and at the same time begging for mercy for a certain clan of the Cayugas, which, it was declared, had always been friendly to the Americans, and had refused to listen to the appeals of either Brant or Butler.

The reply which General Sullivan sent back by the runner was that, although he was glad that the Oneidas were still friendly, the Cayugas must be chastised. And "chastised" they were, as Heber soon had cause to know.

In spite of the failure of the red men and their Tory allies to make a stand against the devastating and advancing army, their presence was not unknown. Watching men in advance of the force and also in its rear made known their movements, and when with renewed determination General Sullivan led his followers on into their further work of destruction, when he set forth from Catherines-

town, their approach was speedily heralded, and the Indians fled from their homes in terror. Many of the soldiers, amazed at the discovery of frame and even of painted houses in some of the Indian villages, of peach orchards and pear, as well as of apple, and of many other evidences of a civilization higher than they had believed could be found among the savages, were loud in their protests against the seemingly wanton destruction. But Sullivan was relentless, and besides, his orders were clear and unmistakable. The only method by which the red men could be taught that they must abandon their attacks on the homes of the white people was by the destruction of their own. This would, it was believed, impress them not only with the power of the colonial troops, but would also of necessity compel the tribes to remain at their own homes, both to provide for the immediate wants of their own families and to restore the ruined houses. Even Washington, tender-hearted man though he was, was firmly convinced that no other course could be followed, and General Sullivan was not one to disobey instructions.

So day by day, as the army proceeded, a little settlement would be burned, a larger village set on fire, and the growing crops or the

stores relentlessly destroyed. In a week Sullivan had crossed the outlet of Seneca Lake, and then with his troops arranged in three divisions moved forward upon Kanadseagea, — the capital of the Seneca nation. Here the scouts had reported that Butler and Brant were endeavoring to induce the Indians to make another stand and hazard a battle. There were at least sixty houses in the village, and gardens and orchards were numerous and beautiful. Sullivan's plan was to surround the town, but as it was speedily reported that the terrified inhabitants had all fled, he sent one division on to destroy two other villages while the main body laid the Seneca capital in ruins.

It was when this task had been accomplished and the army was departing on its further work of destruction, that Heber Otis made a discovery which was as startling as it was puzzling.

CHAPTER XXIX

A WORK OF DESTRUCTION

WHILE the Indians were fleeing in confusion from the village, and the army was pressing forward in pursuit, Heber Otis was suddenly aroused by the sound of a low cry that came from the bushes past which he was rushing. Puzzled by the strange sound, the young soldier stopped abruptly, and cautiously entering the brush, in amazement beheld before him a little white boy not more than seven years of age. The little fellow looked up as Heber approached and for a moment ceased crying, but as the young soldier eagerly plied him with questions he appeared to be too frightened to respond.

"What is your name?" inquired Heber.
"Are you alone?"

The sobbing of the child broke forth afresh, and in consternation Heber for a moment peered about him for some explanation of the child's presence. Satisfied that it would be impossible to obtain any information from the lad, he suddenly stooped and lifted the little fellow in his arms and began to run back

toward the place where the reserves were stationed. The boy struggled and screamed and kicked lustily, but the young soldier grimly held his burden, not even pausing to explain the meaning of it to the men whom he met, and who stared at him as he ran past them.

In a brief time he arrived at his destination, and, hastily committing the child to the care of a wounded officer, he then ran swiftly back to rejoin his comrades. Several days elapsed before Heber learned that this officer had been among the sixty that were sent back to Tioga, and that the man had taken the lad with him. Nor did Heber ever learn who the boy was nor what became of him. It was one of the strange and unexplained events that occurred on the invasion of Sullivan's army.

The main body now proceeded to the Indian village of Canandaigua, where the men were surprised to behold "twenty-three very elegant houses, mostly framed and in general large." These, together with the humbler dwellings, the crops and the stores, were all destroyed before the army moved on to Honeoye, where, after a similar work of destruction had been accomplished, a strong garrison was left.

The direction of the army was now toward

the village of Genesee, which was the great capital of the western tribes in the confederacy, and it was currently reported that here were to be found the most fertile and best cultivated fields and the richest stores of any of the Six Nations.

Here it was reported, too, that the Indians and their white allies were again planning to give battle. A council had been held, and the determination made to strike one more blow in the effort to drive back the terrible army of the invaders. The women and children were sent by the warriors for safety into a place far back in the woods, and then the Indians, selecting as a place of ambush and a battle-ground a position between Honeoye Creek and Connessius Lake, awaited the approach of their enemies.

Mistaking the advance guard for the main army, the howling red men rushed forth from their hiding-places as the white men drew near, and began an attack ; but as the white men in advance merely dropped back to the main body, the Indians, as soon as they perceived their mistake, at once turned and fled, and the only result of the plan was the capture by the Iroquois of two Oneida Indians,—one of them Eagle's Eye and the other a warrior whose

name Heber afterwards learned was Honyerry. Slight as the affair appeared to be, the capture of the young Oneida led to a most exciting experience, in which Heber himself shared, as we shall learn.

From Honeoye Sullivan led his army on to Kanaghsaws, and then prepared to strike Little Beard's town. To accomplish this latter task the more easily, the commander selected young Lieutenant Boyd of the rifle corps to reconnoitre the town, which was of much importance and also contained a castle.

Young Boyd selected twenty-six men to accompany him, among whom were Timothy Murphy, Miles Sprague, and Heber Otis. The advance of the little band to Little Beard's town was unimpeded, although all were aware that their movements were doubtless watched by the red men concealed along the line of march. Upon the arrival of Boyd and his men at the village, they found the place deserted save for two Indians whom Miles and Timothy shot and the latter scalped; and then they began their return to the main body with their report.

On the way the men by chance came so close to the red men that had the Oneida prisoner in charge, that Heber and Timothy,

who were together and somewhat to the left of their companions, were almost able to reach forth with their hands and touch the warriors as they filed past the brush into which the two white men had darted for concealment. Heber's excitement became intense as he watched the men, but Timothy apparently was as unconcerned as if he were in the camp of his friends.

Suddenly the line of warriors halted, and two Indians were brought face to face, and Heber's excitement increased when he became aware that they were the two Oneida brothers, Hungry Wolf and Eagle's Eye, one of whom had been treacherous to the Americans, and the other — now a prisoner — had been their faithful friend.

The two brothers were now calmly facing each other, and the only evidence of anything unusual was the gleam of Hungry Wolf's eyes as he gazed steadily into the face of his brother. Suddenly he began to speak, and although he used the Oneida tongue Heber was sufficiently familiar with it to enable him to understand what was said.

" Brother! You have merited death, and shall have your deserts. When the rebels raised their hatchets to fight their good master, you sharpened your knife, you brightened

your rifle and led on our foes to the fields of our fathers.

“Brother, you have merited death! The hatchet or the war club shall finish your career. When I begged of you to follow me in the fortunes of war you were deaf to my cries. You spurned my entreaties.

“Brother, you have merited death, and shall have your deserts, and shall die by our hands. When those rebels had driven us from the fields of our fathers to seek new houses, it was you who could dare to step forth as their pilot and conduct them even to the doors of our wigwams to butcher our children and put us to death. No crime can be greater. But though you have merited death, you shall die on this spot, and my hands shall not be stained with the blood of a brother. *Who will strike?*”

As the young Oneida spoke he turned and glanced calmly at the assembled warriors. In a moment Little Beard himself stepped forward, raised aloft his hatchet, which flashed in the air for a moment, and then the young Oneida fell dead at his feet.

A low exclamation escaped Heber's lips at the sight, but in an instant even the horror was forgotten in the excitement that followed. The other Oneida prisoner, who had been

standing between two of the Seneca warriors with an arm clasped by each, now suddenly broke from his captors and with a bound darted into the forest, all unaware that he was running directly toward the little band which Lieutenant Boyd was leading. In an instant the warcry was raised, and both Heber and Timothy began to run from the place back toward their companions, though they were running in a line parallel with that which the Indians were following.

The two men could see that the forest seemed to be swarming with the red men, and it speedily became evident that there were many more of the warriors than were in the force which Little Beard had been leading, when the unfortunate young Oneida had been slain at the word of his own brother. Unknown to Boyd, Brant himself and some of his white and red allies had been concealed nearby, hoping that the army would pass their place of concealment and that another successful ambuscade might be made. The cry of the warriors in pursuit of the fleeing Honyerry, however, had aroused them, and now they too were joining in the chase.

"Haber," whispered Timothy, "go back and tell Sullivan."

"And leave you and the men here?"

"Yis, yis. Yez'll do more that way nor—"

"I'll stay with you," said Heber quietly; and not another word was spoken as the two men ran swiftly to warn their comrades of their peril.

It was not long before the shrill cries betokened the approach of the warriors, and Hon-yerry himself by this time had joined Boyd and acquainted him with the pursuit of the Indians. The wild cries seemed to rise on every side, and as the young lieutenant gazed about him it seemed to him that he was entirely surrounded. Hastily assembling his men about him, he told them that the sole hope of escape was to keep close together and force their way by a determined rush against one point in the circle.

Instantly the men grasped their rifles, and together rushed against a point in the surrounding band. Not one of the white men fell, and though some of the Indian warriors were seen to fall, a rush of the savages toward the place compelled the white men to draw back. Again at the young lieutenant's word the men hastily reloaded and made a dash toward another part of the circle, but once more were driven back, and this time several fell.

Again the resolute little band loaded their rifles and with increased determination flung themselves against another point; but here the Indians were well massed, and, as soon as the white men had fired, they rushed upon the little force, which now had been reduced to Lieutenant Boyd and only seven of his men; and in a moment all were made prisoners by the yelling warriors.

Throughout this struggle Heber and Timothy had remained outside the encroaching circle, assured of a measure of safety because the Indians were between them and Lieutenant Boyd's band. Twice they had fired, and each time Heber had seen two red men fall, but the entire body was so intent upon taking the little company within the circle they had formed that apparently they had no thought, or in the excitement had ignored, any peril from men outside. Every rush the lieutenant had made had been seen by Heber, and, although he and Timothy were quick to aid by the use of the rifles, every time they had seen the brave little band hurled back by the overwhelming numbers of their foes.

When the third and last attempt to cut their way through had failed, Heber was about to call to Timothy, who was behind a tree not

more than three yards from the one which concealed himself, but he suddenly stopped when he perceived Little Beard and a dozen of his men throw themselves upon the helpless Oneida, Honyerry, and in a moment the unfortunate warrior was literally hacked into pieces.

"Come, Tim," whispered Heber, sick at the horrible sight, "we must go back for help, or the lieutenant will never come out of this alive."

"Roight yez be, lad," responded Timothy, as he cautiously withdrew from his shelter.

The two men, alternately running and halting behind trees, soon arrived at a distance from the scene they had witnessed, when they were assured that they were measurably safe from pursuit, and then keeping well together ran swiftly in the direction of the main body.

An hour and a half elapsed, however, before they arrived in the camp, and then their report instantly aroused their companions, and in a brief time General Hand's brigade was marching swiftly toward the scene, he being soon after followed by the main division.

When the soldiers arrived at the place to which Timothy and Heber conducted them, they discovered that the Indians had fled.

Doubtless they had been informed by their own scouts of the approach of the army, and the evidences were abundant that their haste in departing had been so great that they had left many of their possessions behind them, and even had abandoned the bodies of some of their own fallen warriors.

To pursue them at the time, although it was manifest that they had taken some of the men as prisoners with them, was not deemed advisable, and with sad hearts the force at once turned their attention to the burial of the mangled remains of their dead comrades.

Heber's surprise and sorrow when he discovered the body of Miles Sprague among the dead were greater than Timothy's, but there was no opportunity afforded for conversation, and as soon as the task had been accomplished preparations were at once made for a further advance. Even the fate of Lieutenant Boyd and the seven men that had been carried away with him by the Indians was not known, but as it was now nearly the middle of September, and the nights already were becoming cold, and the supplies of the army were low, it was resolved to push forward in the work of destruction and accomplish all that might be done before frost and cold as well as hunger

should come to the aid of Brant and his warriors.

Steadily forward into the beautiful Valley of the Genesee the army moved, the men astonished at the fertility of the fields, and the comforts to be found in the villages. A feeling of intense anger was manifest among the men when the army in its advance found the mutilated bodies of Lieutenant Boyd and one of his men, so horribly disfigured that even a description cannot be given. The town of Genesee, with its one hundred and twenty-eight houses, was burned, and all the surrounding fields of corn were set on fire. The Indians, no longer able to stand against the approach of Sullivan's army, were now fleeing toward the fort at Niagara.

CHAPTER XXX

THE RIFLEMAN'S DOUBLE

THE axe, the torch, and the rifle had all been used in the destruction of the homes and possessions of the Indians. Even the corn of the previous year, which had been carefully stored by the red men, was not spared in the general conflagration. The valley of the Genesee was now a scene of ruin, and the oncoming winter was certain to prove a time of suffering for the families of the warriors that had listened to the specious plans of Brant and his Tory friends. All that the Americans had demanded was that the Six Nations should remain neutral in the struggle between the colonies and the mother country, and had the red men heeded the word they would doubtless have been saved all the suffering that followed Sullivan's invasion. The continual efforts of the Indians to assist the redcoats, the appeals of Brant, who perhaps was moved by an honest purpose to protect his own countrymen, the massacres at Wyoming, Cherry Valley, Schoharie, and else-

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where, the attack upon the scattered and unprotected homes of the settlers, all combined to arouse the people to teach the tribes that the command of the great father must be heeded. Not because it was desired, but because it was deemed necessary by Washington for the defense of the people dwelling upon the frontiers, Sullivan, with his army and that of Clinton, was sent directly into the country of the Six Nations, and such deeds as have been recorded in these pages were enacted because there was no other way of teaching the savages the lesson that was so much needed.

As to the effect produced by it, there can be no question that it inflamed the hatred, already bitter and intense, between the white men and the red, and led to a long series of dire deeds that made the early history of the border consist largely of tales of blood. The Indians not unnaturally were filled with a desire to avenge the wanton destruction of life and home, while the white men, not forgetful of the massacre of their own friends and neighbors, came to believe that "the only good Indian was the one who was dead."

At the same time it must not be forgotten that Sullivan's invasion was almost a neces-

sity demanded by the conditions of the times, and certainly resulted in depriving the Six Nations of much of their ability to unite in any concerted warfare upon the white settlers, and for a time at least afforded an opportunity to the patriots to devote themselves more freely to the greater contest for the liberty of the new nation.

After the destruction wrought in the Genesee Valley, much to the surprise of his men, General Sullivan gave the order for the army to return. Every one had confidently believed that the invasion would continue even to Fort Niagara, and there can be slight question that the important post would have fallen if the march had been continued. The lateness of the season, the distance from his base of supplies, and the weariness of many of his followers doubtless combined to cause the commander to decide as he did; and following the most direct route to the Chemung and Tioga rivers, the army at once began its march across the country. At the junction of the rivers the two other divisions of the army which had been sent to destroy the capital of the Cayugas and some half-dozen other villages also reported, and then Clinton's men started on their return to Schenectady and

Albany. This return was accomplished in safety, the prisoners were safely delivered at Albany, and the militia then scattered, every man to return to his own home and look to the wants of his own family. And yet nearly every one was holding himself in readiness for the summons that at any time might come for him to rejoin the army and lend his aid in the long struggle for the freedom of the colonists, — a struggle which at this time gave slight promise of an early end.

To Heber and Timothy, who remained with Clinton's army until it arrived on the shores of Otsego Lake, there had been few interruptions in the monotony of the return. The nights were colder now, and the brilliant-hued foliage of the forests proclaimed the power and presence of the nightly frosts. The two soldiers were standing together late one afternoon on the shore where the army had encamped, and were talking concerning the events of the invasion and the prospects of a speedy return to their homes, at least for Heber, though Timothy was by no means certain of his own plans for the approaching winter.

"An' who is that man?" suddenly demanded the Irishman, as a man whom both he

and Heber had frequently seen within the past two days approached them.

"I don't know, Tim," replied Heber, as he glanced again at the stranger.

"Faith, an' it's coomin' here he is!"

"He wants to see you, Tim."

"Well, if th' two oyes in his head an' —"

The rifleman abruptly ceased as the stranger drew near and, peering into the face of the younger man, said, "I'm looking for Heber Otis."

"That's my name," responded Heber quickly. The man before him was somewhat older than he, and Heber was positive he did not know him. There was something repellant in the manner of the stranger, and somehow the young soldier's suspicions were quickly aroused, although he could not explain to himself why the man impressed him as he did.

"Are you Heber Otis?" said the stranger.

"Then I have something to say to you."

"Very well. Say it right here," replied Heber, aware by the man's manner that he was desirous of speaking to him alone.

"Do you know the Campbells?" inquired the man after a slight hesitation.

"Colonel Campbell? Of course I do!"

said Heber eagerly. "Have you heard anything more about his wife and children?"

"That's what I wanted to speak to you about."

"Where are they? What have you heard? Are they alive?"

"They are; they were a few days ago, anyway. They were carried into one of the Seneca villages, and when Sullivan's army came they were hurried right on to Niagara."

"Are they there now?"

"I think so. What I wanted to tell you was that there is a runner from the fort who says he has a letter for you from Mrs. Campbell."

"A letter? For me? From Mrs. Campbell?" said Heber slowly. "I don't see why she should send a letter to me. Why didn't she send it direct to her husband, the colonel? He's in Fort Stanwix now."

"Oh, she has. She doubtless has sent letters to a good many people, hoping some one of them may get into the hands of her friends, and she knew you were in the army, so, as you were an old neighbor, she sent a bit of birch bark to you. She had to prick the letters into the bark and —"

"How did she know I was in the army?"

interrupted Heber. "And how do you know anything about her letters?"

"I told you. There's a runner from the Senecas near here, and he has followed us ever since we left the Genesee."

"What for?"

"He says Mrs. Campbell was good to his mother, and he is trying to do what he can for her now to repay it."

"How do you know all this?"

"This morning I was one of the men in the scouting party near the shore, and this Seneca came up to me holding out his hands to show that he was friendly, and he told me."

"Why did n't he give you the letter and let you give it to me?"

"He said he promised Mrs. Campbell to place it in your hands."

"Where is this Seneca now?"

"That I can't say."

"Where am I to meet him?"

"You are to be down by that maple that has been torn up on the shore yonder, a half-hour after the moon rises to-night. You'll hear a night-hawk call three times, and then stop and call three times again. Then you are to answer. If you don't come alone, the Seneca won't see you at all, for he naturally won't ex-

pose himself to any danger, and he knows how all the men with Clinton feel about him. But he has been true to his promise to Mrs. Campbell, and she was so anxious to get some word to her friends that this fellow has just followed us all the way. He did n't get any chance to speak to any one until this morning, when he saw me. I've been looking for you ever since, and have just found you."

"Will you go with me?"

"To meet this Seneca? No. You won't see him unless you go alone. If you are afraid or try any trick, you'll lose the bit of birch bark on which the woman's very life may depend."

"He does n't know me."

"He will when you call."

"And if I don't go?"

"Then you'll miss it. You are the one to decide, though. I believe the Seneca is in dead earnest, and so will you if you are not afraid to try it."

"Where can I find you? What is your name?"

"I don't know where you'll find me, for I am not going on much further. I leave the army soon."

"What is your name?"

"That does n't matter, either, but I don't mind telling you my name. It is Joe Elerson. Perhaps you have heard of me before. I'm one of Morgan's riflemen."

"Joe Elerson!" exclaimed Heber. "You Joe Elerson? Why —"

"I see you have heard of me," laughed the man. "I've given my message, anyway, and whether you pay any attention to it or not won't affect me. It may all be a trick, but I don't think it is."

"Hould on a bit, will yez," called Timothy quickly, as the man turned away. "Oi want a worrd wid yez mesilf. It's Joe Elerson Oi'm wantin' t' —"

The man was gone by this time, for he had not once turned back to respond to the Irishman's hail, and Heber was left alone on the shore. Confident that his friend would speedily return, and curious to learn what would be the result of the interview between the man who had tried to pass himself off as Joe Elerson and Timothy, Heber waited until a half-hour or more had elapsed.

Heber, as he thought over the interview, was confident the stranger was one who was certainly not to be trusted, and that, doubtless believing that neither of the two men

he had approached was acquainted with the rifleman, he had endeavored to make use of his name to add to the importance of the message he had given. Timothy, however, would soon clear up the mystery, Heber assured himself, and as the Irishman still did not return Heber sought his place among the men. As soon as he had eaten his supper the words of the stranger came back to him with a fresh interest. Timothy had not as yet appeared, but as the rifleman frequently was absent from the army his failure to find him now only troubled Heber in the matter of the mystery of the man who had declared his own name to be Joe Elerson.

The message from the Seneca runner, however, might not be entirely false, Heber thought, as the conversation continued to occur to his mind. Certainly the plight of Mrs. Campbell and her little children was pitiful, and that she might have done as the man had suggested, and pricked letters into pieces of birch bark, was not improbable. In her desperation, too, she might have sent several of these missives by the hands of Senecas that were friendly to her, and Heber well knew how tenacious the Indians all were in all that pertained to obligations incurred through sympathy or friendship.

The longer Heber thought of the matter, the more strongly was he inclined to test the suggestion to meet the man on the shore below the camp. If Timothy would only come back, so that he might follow at a distance and be able to aid if the need of help arose! Already the moon could be seen just rising above the tops of the trees, and impulsively Heber decided to wait no longer for the return of his friend, but to go at once to the appointed place. The discipline of the camp was not strict, and he knew he would have no difficulty in going down the shore, and at the same time he was confident that the designated place was so near that an enemy would not venture to come there, or if he did come, help could be quickly gained by a call that easily would reach the camp.

Nevertheless, Heber carefully looked to the priming of his rifle, and as he walked along the shore carefully scanned the adjacent forest. Not a person was to be seen, and as he drew near the huge upturned roots of the maple, that faced the lake like a wall, he was peering all about him for the man to appear.

Suddenly the weird cry of a night-hawk sounded, and then after a brief interval was thrice repeated. Recognizing the signal, He-

ber drew nearer the fallen tree, and as he did so he was not surprised to behold an Indian suddenly emerge and advance toward him.

"How!" exclaimed the savage.

"How!" responded Heber.

"Want him birch bark?" inquired the Indian, as he extended his hand with something in it which to Heber appeared to be what the man had suggested.

"Yes, I want it," said Heber quickly.

Unmindful of his precautions, Heber eagerly drew near the Indian, and in a moment there was a rush of three men from behind the trees, the young soldier was seized from behind and thrown violently to the ground, his hands and feet were held, and a hand was placed upon his mouth while he was bound and gagged. Yet Heber could see even in the dim light the evil face of George Cuck peering down into his own.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TORY'S DEMAND

BEFORE the helpless young prisoner had recovered from the effect of the sudden seizure, he was lifted bodily by the hands of his captors and borne swiftly to a place within the nearby forest, where three white men were evidently awaiting their coming. Not a word had been spoken thus far, except when the Seneca had first greeted Heber, and only a hasty conference now took place, but the men spoke in such low tones that the prisoner was unable to hear what was said.

In a brief time, however, the straps by which Heber's ankles were bound were removed, and George Cuck said savagely : —

“ Now, then, bestir yourself and follow me ! Not a word do you speak, either, or it 'll be the last one you ever will have a chance to say.”

Heber made no response, and realizing fully the desperate plight in which he was, without a protest he followed the Tory and the one white man that accompanied him as they rapidly advanced into the forest. His rifle had

been taken from him at the time when he had been seized, and he was aware how foolish any attempt to break away now would be. Bitterly as the young prisoner repented of his folly in heeding the suggestion of the man who had attempted to pass himself off as Joe Elerson, he was now painfully aware that it was useless to refuse to obey the commands of the detested Tory. What George Cuck's plans concerning him might be Heber had no means of conjecturing, but that the Tory would not conduct him to friends of the colonies was manifest.

The very uncertainty of his fate made Heber's fear more intense, while the fact that less than a half-mile distant hundreds of his own comrades were encamped, and that a whisper as to his own predicament would bring them in swift pursuit, only added to his sense of hopelessness. Where his friend Timothy was, or what had been the result of the rifleman's attempt to follow the man that had declared his name to be Joe Elerson, was also uncertain, but at all events the Irishman would have no means of learning the misfortune that had overtaken his young comrade, and Heber's feeling of helplessness increased as his captors steadily and swiftly led him through the woods.

There was no halt made until the dawn appeared, and then George Cuck stopped at a deserted cabin, and he and his companion breakfasted upon food which they had brought with them, and by turns drank from the waters of a spring near the log house. Not a mouthful of food was offered their prisoner, nor was he even permitted to drink from the spring until the Tory's friend insisted that this privilege should be granted, greatly to Heber's relief.

Throughout the day the little party of three stayed in the house, George Cuck remaining awake while his companion slept, and then in turn sleeping while the other man acted as guard. Not once did he speak to the prisoner, and eager as Heber was to learn what the Tory planned to do with him, he did not break in upon the silence.

Near nightfall the journey was resumed, the men advancing in single file, with Heber occupying the middle position. Weary and hungry as Heber was, he was continually alert, but no opportunity presented itself for even an attempt to escape. As the wearisome march continued, the unbroken silence of George Cuck increased Heber's anxiety. Never before had he known the Tory to be

silent for so long a time, and this very fact of itself was not promising.

Several times Heber had recognized familiar places on the journey, and he was convinced that the direction in which they were moving was toward the lower part of the Mohawk Valley. This fact, however, only served to increase his confusion, as well as his fears, for though it might mean that he was not to be carried into Canada, whither many of the captives had been sent, he was positive that George Cuck's designs did not imply any hope. Indeed, Heber firmly believed that the Tory must be planning some unique method of disposing of him, or long before this he would have made use of his rifle.

The dawn of the second day brought the little party near to the region where Heber Otis had passed and repassed frequently on his journeys to or from Schenectady. Susan Randall's home, too, was near by, and as he became aware of the locality Heber's determination to make an attempt to escape returned with redoubled force. Up to this time he had followed without a protest, but his apparent willingness had not for a moment caused the vigilance of his captors to relax. And now as they drew near to the well-known place He-

ber perceived that the Tory was observing him with such an expression of malignity upon his face as he had never before seen there.

It was only a brief time before the party approached the lane that led to Susan's house, and to the prisoner's intense surprise George Cuck at once turned into the lane, and Heber was aware that he was to follow. What it might mean was unknown, but the prisoner's fears were by no means relieved, and as they approached the house a feeling of desperation for a moment swept over him. To come to Susan's house in such a manner and in such a plight was more than could be endured, but as he looked up he perceived George Cuck's eyes upon him, and the uselessness of attempting to escape from two men, both well armed while he himself was unarmed and almost worn out by the long walk and the abstinence from food, was too apparent even to be seriously considered.

The people within the house were already astir, and as the little party drew near the kitchen, the door was opened, and Susan herself appeared with a bucket in her hands. Startled by the unexpected sight, for a moment she stared at the approaching men, and

then her manner abruptly changed. She placed the bucket upon the stone steps, and in apparent calmness waited for the men to come.

"George Cuck," she demanded, "what are you doing here? Don't you know better than to come back at such a time? You promised me you would n't come again, and here you are at the very time when Clinton's men are passing."

"I don't see any," said the Tory hastily as he turned and glanced apprehensively at the road behind him.

"They are here. Several companies have passed this morning."

"I thought they'd go down the Mohawk in their bateaux."

"I don't care what you thought. Come into the house, all of you. You must not stand out here for every passing rebel to see."

The men at once hastily entered the house, and as Heber followed he was confident that Susan gave him one swift glance of sympathy or comprehension. Just what it might imply he did not know, for her manner apparently was unchanged.

"Now tell me, George Cuck," demanded

Susan, when all were in the kitchen, "what you have brought Heber Otis here for."

"You know," said the Tory sullenly.

"No, I do not know."

"Then I'll tell you!" said George Cuck savagely, as he spoke turning for an instant and bestowing upon Heber a look of such rage that the prisoner was fearful his last moment had come. "I'll tell you," resumed the Tory. "You know this young sneak of a rebel?"

"Yes, I know him," replied Susan in a low voice. She spoke calmly, but Heber in surprise could see that her face was deadly pale.

"Of course you know him. Haven't I heard it an' known it for nigh onto two years? Well, you see him now, don't you?"

"Yes, I see him," said the girl, motioning as she spoke for her mother and the children, who now were standing in the doorway staring at the strange scene before them, to come in.

"Mrs. Randall," said George Cuck suddenly, turning to Susan's mother, "have I been good to you since your husband was shot by this rascally rebel?"

"I did n't —" began Heber boldly, but at a glance from Susan he stopped abruptly.

"Don't you put in your words till you are

asked!" shouted the Tory as he advanced threateningly upon the prisoner. "You may have a chance to say your prayers, but don't you speak till you are spoken to."

Heber was silent as he returned the look of malignity, but somehow he was no longer afraid even of the two armed men. The hint that Susan had given of the approach of some of Clinton's men was of itself an inspiration, and somehow there was also a feeling in his heart that the girl's quick wit might aid him in an extremity.

"Now then, Susan," said George Cuck, turning once more to the girl, "I am going to give you just one chance to decide."

"Decide what?"

"Decide whether you'd rather have me stand this man up in the yard there while Sim and I fire at him, or give me your word of honor, and this sneakin' rebel gives me his word too, though I can't say I'd believe what he said, that never so long as you live you'll ever speak to him or he'll come here again."

"Suppose I don't give any such promise?" said the girl at last slowly.

"Then I'll fix it so that you won't have t' give any promise. I caught him over by Otsego Lake by the easiest trick you ever heard of.

I did n't believe it would work with a baby, but it did with him, it seems. Then I've brought him all the way here just to give you a chance t' decide. A dozen times or more I could hardly keep my finger off the trigger. I wanted to be done with him for good and all, and that was the easiest way out of it. But I did n't do it, for I wanted to get this word from you. An' I've been fair. Now it's for you to say which it shall be. If you and he both will give me your word, then I'll let him go. If you don't think that's th' best thing t' do, then Sim and I'll tie him up to a tree, and we'll try firing at him for a mark."

"And the first time you fired summon every one of Clinton's men, that are likely to be passing here any time, straight to the house."

"I'll chance that. Maybe, though, instead of using the rifles, you'd rather have us take something that won't make so much noise." And George Cuck placed his hand significantly upon his belt, where more silent weapons were to be seen.

"I'll tell you, George. You give Heber a rifle, and you take one—"

"I'll not do anything of the kind," interrupted the Tory.

"It might not be so safe for you, that's true —"

"Never mind whether it's safer or not. I've got him, and I've brought him straight to you. Now what do you say?"

"Suppose I don't say anything?"

To Heber it seemed as if the girl was doing her utmost to prolong the conversation. Perhaps she was hoping for some interruption, or that he himself might seize some opportunity which she might provide. In spite of the desperate plight in which he found himself, for a moment his hopes revived. He was listening eagerly for the sound of men approaching from the road, but not a sound could be heard. The prospect of aid from that quarter was slight indeed. In the room standing directly behind him was George Cuck's companion, armed and prepared to act instantly at the word of the Tory. Before him, with his rifle in his hands, was George Cuck himself, and from him no mercy was to be expected. His sole hope apparently depended upon Susan's quick wit, but even that hope seemed to be gone when the girl said: —

"If I promise you what you ask, and Heber does too, will you promise that you won't come here again, either?"

"I'll promise not to *leave* here," laughed the Tory harshly.

"Suppose I promise and Heber does n't?"

"That is n't enough. I'll tell you what I'll do, though," added George Cuck eagerly. "If you'll give me your promise and he won't, then I'll take your word, and I'll send him where he won't trouble us any more."

"Where is that?"

"It may be to Montreal, or it may be to the sugarhouse in New York. I can't say just where it'll be, but he'll be safe, anyway."

"What do you say, Heber?" demanded the girl, as she turned to the prisoner.

"You know what I'll say, Jemima," replied Heber quietly. "As far as I myself am concerned, I would n't give George Cuck such a promise if I knew he would fire at me the next minute. But I'll do just what you say, Jemima. If it will make it any better for you, I don't want to stand in your way."

"Well, George, I'm afraid you might be heard if you fired here. And I don't want any such thing to be done here, either. We have had trouble enough since my father was — since my father died. We have n't any reason to help the rebels, either, as everybody knows. Before I give you any promise I want

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you to go down to the road and make sure that there aren't any of Clinton's men coming. Go right down now and see."

For an instant both Heber and the Tory stared at the girl as if neither believed what he had heard. The Tory, however, was the first to speak, and he said suspiciously, "I'll do it, Susan, since you ask it. Sim," he added, turning to his companion, "you keep him covered with your gun while I'm gone, and if he takes a step, you know what to do."

Reluctantly George Cuck stepped forth from the house and began to run swiftly down the lane. Heber, believing now that his own fate was settled, looked again at the girl, who, he was fearful, was about to yield to the demands of the Tory.

CHAPTER XXXII

CONCLUSION

THE man whom George Cuck had called Sim was standing near the open door, where he could hear or see any sudden demand for aid by his friend, and at the same time he was able to guard the prisoner who had been left in the room.

Apparently eager to observe what the Tory was doing, Susan stepped close to the guard and peered down the lane. Heber was watching her actions, fearful that she had been induced to decide in the Tory's favor, and yet not entirely without hope even yet that she would contrive in some manner to free him from his critical predicament.

Suddenly and without a word of warning Susan threw herself against the guard, and by one strong push sent him stumbling from the doorway. Before the man could recover himself he had fallen from the stone step and was sprawling upon the ground. Instantly the intrepid girl had turned to Heber and in a low voice excitedly exclaimed : —

“Run, Heber! Run!”

Darting through the doorway in the rear of the room, the young soldier fled toward the nearby sugar-bush at his utmost speed. Not once did he glance behind him, as by leaps and bounds he sped for the place of refuge. Every moment he expected to hear the report of Sim's rifle, but for some strange and apparently inexplicable reason neither was the gun heard nor did any shout arise. Breathless from his excitement and exertions, Heber gained the border of the woods, and then, pausing only for one swift glance behind him, continued his flight. Still the silence was unbroken; and then the thought of the peril of Susan instantly occurred to him. Had the girl been made to suffer for what she had done in his behalf? The rage of George Cuck at the loss of his prisoner Heber knew would be intense, and, sobered by the thought of Susan's danger, he stopped and cautiously began to steal back toward the border where he would be able to discover what was being done in the house.

He had retraced but a part of the way when he was startled by the sudden appearance of Sim as he darted from the same door through which Heber himself had fled. The man was



SUSAN THREW HERSELF AGAINST THE GUARD

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running swiftly and coming directly toward the place where the young soldier was standing.

The sight of the approaching man was to Heber an evidence of pursuit, and instantly he fled among the trees in a direction at right angles to the course which Sim was following; but the thought of Susan's danger caused him soon to stop. He obtained a glimpse of the man in the midst of the trees, and could see that there was no gun in his hands, and that apparently Sim was running at his utmost speed and was not even looking about him, for not once did he turn to either side. In a moment the man had disappeared from sight, and only the sound of a fallen branch broken beneath his feet had been heard. What it all could mean Heber was unable to conjecture. It was manifest that the Tory was in desperate haste, and equally apparent that he was not searching for any one in his flight. Had Susan been harmed, and was the man endeavoring to escape? The question was too vital to be ignored, and in spite of his own lack of defenses and the danger to himself Heber resolutely turned again toward the border of the woods, determined to learn how the family had fared before he resumed his flight.

As he drew near the clearing he stopped abruptly, when he perceived three men near the house apparently on guard, for one had been stationed at each of the corners that he could see. Again looking intently at the men, he was convinced that he recognized them as members of his own company, and then without delaying an instant the young soldier darted from the woods and began to run swiftly across the clearing toward the house.

His appearance was greeted by a call from the man nearest him, and instantly all three men raised and aimed their rifles at the approaching man. "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" called Heber frantically, waving his arms as he spoke.

The startled men waited for him to come nearer, and as soon as he was close at hand he was quickly recognized by his friends, one of whom demanded : —

"Where do you come from, Heber Otis?"

"From the woods," replied Heber breathlessly. "Has anything happened here? Has any one of the family been hurt? Has —"

"You'd better go in and ask Tim," interrupted the guard.

"Tim? Tim Murphy? Is he in the house?" demanded Heber; and then without

waiting to hear his questions answered the excited young soldier darted through the door.

His coming caused the three men he discovered in the room to turn sharply upon him, and then Timothy Murphy, in his delight at the unexpected appearance of his friend, exclaimed :

“ Ach, Haber, me darlint, it’s th’ rascal we have this toime, sure.”

“ What ? Who ? ”

“ Why, it’s George Cuck, I dunno.”

“ Where is he ? ”

“ That’s what we’re jist afther foindin’ out. Me an’ me frinds here were just coomin’ up th’ road whin what should we see but th’ Toory himsilf runnin’ up th’ lane here and coomin’ into this house as if all the powers were afther him. An’ they were, Oi’m thinkin’. He’s here, Haber. Now th’ question is where is he, I dunno ? He’s in this house somewhere. Hey ! George Cuck ! ” suddenly called the Irishman, as he turned about and addressed the unseen Tory. “ Will yez be afther coomin’ out o’ that place where yez arre hid an’ give yersilf up loike a gintleman ? ”

No response was given to the rifleman’s demand, and after a brief pause Heber said eagerly, “ Tim, where’s the family ? ”

“ Th’ Randalls, is it ? Well, Oi can’t jist

be afther tellin' yez, but we tould 'em they 'd betther all go out t' th' barn till afther we 'd tould George Cuck, bad luck t' th' spalpeen! how glad we was t' mate him."

"Perhaps he's out there, too," suggested Heber.

"Indade, an' he is not. We scattered a bit whin we followed him up t' th' house, an' niver a bit did anny one see o' him afther he coome inside. He's here, Haber, me lad, an' if he's here thin we'll git him."

The search for the Tory was at once begun. Every possible place of concealment in the floor was inspected, and even the huge chest which stood on the rude stairway, in which Heber himself at one time had found refuge,¹ was carefully examined.

"Sure, an' he would n't be waitin' here for us," said Timothy. "It's upstairs he's gone, an' we'll foind him there. Coom on."

"Perhaps he went out on the roof and got away."

"Wid a man watchin' iv'ry corner o' th' house? Faith, an' Oi think not, lad."

The men now prepared to go to the floor above the one where they were standing, and as they again approached the chest, Timothy

¹ See *The Red Chief*.

pushed it slightly to one side. "'T is well t' be certain there 's no one—" he began, and then abruptly ceased.

The Irishman had moved the chest far enough to enable him to perceive that it covered an opening into the wall behind it, sufficiently large to conceal a man. The discovery had caused the rifleman to stop abruptly in what he was saying, and then with a glance of warning at his companions he began again to push the chest farther from the position in which it had first been discovered. The excitement of every one was intense, and striving to guard against a surprise they all stepped back a few feet and eagerly watched Timothy as he slowly removed the box.

Suddenly George Cuck himself leaped from the hiding-place, and as he sprang to his feet he instantly leveled a pistol at Heber's head. The young soldier was without any weapon, and for one almost overwhelming instant it seemed to him that his last moment on earth had arrived. The blazing eyes of the Tory were filled with an expression of hatred so intense that, despite his own peril, the sight caused a shudder to creep over the young soldier. Never before had he seen such malignity stamped upon a human face.

In a flash Timothy Murphy, who had been prepared for just such an event, discharged his rifle without lifting it to his shoulder. The Tory's arm fell as he pitched forward — dead.

A silence came over the little group as they looked down at the fallen man whose evil deeds had long been a source of trouble and sorrow to the scattered people of the region. The guards came rushing into the house, and they too at the sight before them became as silent as their comrades. With Heber the feeling of relief at the escape from the peril that had threatened him was followed by a touch of sympathy. He recalled the days when he had known George Cuck as a boy in Cherry Valley. The devotion of George's mother to her son, the better side of the nature of the man whom later he had come to detest and fear, all were seen again, and for a time Heber's feeling was almost one of sorrow.

Timothy Murphy was the first to break in upon the silence. Turning to Heber he said, "Well, lad, th'spalpeen won't be afther troublin' you nor anny o' us more, Oi'm thinkin'. Oi did n't know but he had yez this toime, after Oi heard over at Otsego how he got yez."

"Did you hear about that?" inquired Heber quietly.

"Sure, an' Oi did thot. An 't is trouble enough yez have given us. But Oi had niver a doubt, me bye, Oi should find yez roight here."

Ignoring the smile on the Irishman's face, Heber was about to turn away from the place and go to the barn to inform Susan of what had befallen the Tory, when Timothy said quickly :—

"Haber, lad, Oi 'm thinkin' yez 'll want t' stay here a bit, and th' sooner th' loikes o' us lave th' betther yez 'll be loiking us. Here, byes," he added, "take hould, an' we'll rid th' house o' *this*." The Irishman and his friends at once stooped and lifted the body from the floor, and, first making certain that they were not seen by the family, they carried their burden to the lane, and soon afterward disappeared from sight as they proceeded down the road.

Assured at last that his friends were gone and would not return, Heber hastened to the barn, and summoned Susan and her family. When they had entered the house he briefly related what had occurred, and then, as no one spoke, he said, "Jemima, I must be going now. Probably after this you'll never want to see me again."

"Why do you say that, Heber?" inquired Susan.

"Don't you feel that way about it?" said Heber eagerly.

"There is no reason why I should. George Cuck has been good to my mother — to us all. He brought us food, and was kind in many ways. But I always knew he was a bad man. I detested him. I never wanted him to come here. And he never will come again," she added soberly.

"Susan," said Heber, "this is no place for you and your mother and the children to be in."

"Is n't it?" responded the girl, a smile for an instant appearing on her face.

"No, it is n't! Just think of all you have had to endure here. And the danger is n't all passed. You have n't any one to protect you or even to provide what you need. Why don't you come to Schenectady?"

"What! *Tories* at Schenectady! I fancy the people there think we are near enough as it is."

"It is n't so! Every one would be glad to have you come. It will be safer, and you'll have plenty of friends, too. My mother will be glad to —"

"No, Heber," interrupted the girl quietly. "You are kind to think of this, but we cannot do it. We must stay here. It's the only home we have, and I don't believe we shall have any more trouble now."

Aware of Susan's feelings, Heber did not continue to urge his friend to listen to his plea, but he none the less was resolved to see that the family did not want if his own efforts in their behalf could avail.

"Heber," said Susan as the young soldier prepared to depart, "there is one thing I must say to you. You remember that letter you found at Mr. Service's?"

"Yes."

"Do you still think I wrote it?"

"Not if you say you did n't."

"I do say it. My name is on it, but I did not write it. It was written by some one else, and there was need of writing at the time, or so it was thought."

"Do you know who wrote it?"

"Yes."

As Heber looked up he perceived an expression in Mrs. Randall's eyes that instantly seemed to explain it all. Doubtless she herself had written the note in a time of special need. But he did not refer to his suspicion, and soon,

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with the rifle which General Schuyler had given him now restored to his possession, he set forth on his return to Schenectady.

Of his welcome there this tale makes no record, but we may be well assured that the young soldier had no question as to its nature. There he heard of the stirring adventure of Mad Anthony Wayne in the capture of Stony Point,¹ but aside from two or three minor engagements in the south it was the only evidence of active warfare the year recorded. The policy of Washington had now become one of waiting, and he was hoping to tire out the British patience by his own delays. How well he succeeded is known by every schoolboy.

The feeling against General Schuyler gradually gave place to a sincere regard for the man who by his large-mindedness and the bigness of his heart at last compelled even his enemies to acknowledge his worth. And Heber Otis remained one of the most ardent admirers of the man who, like Washington and the colonies themselves, at last won by patience what force could never have accomplished.

Long before the decisive battle of Yorktown, Heber Otis and his family had returned to their home in Cherry Valley. The

¹ July 15, 1779.

aggressive spirit of the Five Nations had been almost crushed by the invasion of Sullivan's army. Malignant and bitter feelings were aroused by what many called a wanton destruction of life and property, and for years the feeling between the white man and the red on the frontiers was one of hatred. It was one of the heritages of the war — indeed, a heritage of almost any war. That Washington and the Congress were right in planning the invasion, and Sullivan and Clinton in leading the expedition, seems to be justified by a careful study of the conditions of the times. And it is a cause of rejoicing to-day that a better state is beginning, at least, to prevail. Not enmity but friendship, not injustice but help, are the aims of many in dealing with the Indian problem.

The greatness of Brant is also beginning to be recognized. An ardent patriot, eager to help his own people to retain the lands of their fathers, he fought bravely and tenaciously. He was less cruel than some of his Tory comrades, more just than many of his enemies, and one of the greatest spirits of his race. He died on the twenty-fourth of November, 1807, in a house he had built on a tract of land at the head of Lake Ontario, —

the gift of the king to the Mohawk chief. Bravely and patiently he endured the long suffering of his last illness, upheld by his natural patience and the spirit of the religion he had professed, for Joseph Brant had become a communicant in the Episcopal church. His last words were, "Have pity on the poor Indians; if you can get any influence with the great, endeavor to do them all the good you can."

It is a pleasure to relate that Mrs. Campbell and her children, after many trying experiences in their captivity among the Senecas, were at last taken to Niagara, and from that fort were transported to Montreal, where arrangements for their return to their home were made by British officers who had interested themselves in the release of the brave woman and her children. And the return of the Campbells to their Cherry Valley home was made at the very time when Heber Otis also returned with his own people to the beautiful region, and we may be sure there was rejoicing in each household.

Heber himself did not see any more active service in the war that lasted until 1783. He was still enrolled as a minuteman, but the war tide had swept to other parts of the land, and

the chief duties of the men on the border were to repel the attacks of prowling bands of Indians. Nor did Heber ever learn who the man was that had tried to pass as Joe Elerson and had helped in his capture.

As for Timothy Murphy, his services were in demand, and his skill in the use of his rifle found no release till the long struggle was ended.

It is difficult for one who visits the region to-day to believe that ever it could have been the scene of the bloodshed and suffering which marked the invasion by Sullivan's army. Beautiful cities, thriving villages, wide and fertile fields, fruitful orchards are to be seen on every side.

Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war.¹

In all the country of the Mohawk and Schoharie it is doubtful if ever there has been a happier home than that in which Heber Otis and his wife "Jemima" are said to have dwelt, for it was not many years after the exciting experiences which have been recorded in these pages when the young soldier acquired a section of land for himself and took to himself a "blackeyed comely young

¹ Milton, *To the Lord General Cromwell*.

woman to be his lawful and wedded wife and her name it was Susan Randall."

That their lives were happy and that they lived long and prospered, some of their great-great-grandchildren, who have very kindly given the writer of this story many of the incidents which have been incorporated, are ready to affirm. And that they speak truly, those who have come to know both Heber and Susan will agree.

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